(3/25/81)
(5/25/81)
(5/29/81)

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG

(From a play by George S. Kaufman & Moss Hart)

Book by

GEORGE FURTH

Music & Lyrics by

STEPHEN SONDHEIM

Directed by

HAROLD PRINCE

The Merrily Company
1270 Avenue of the Americas
Suite 2410
New York, New York 10020

(212) 399-0960

ACT I

Scene 1

The stage is most easily described as an abstract high school gymnasium with lockers along the three walls (each cast member has his/her own locker). The Downstage area is filled with rows of bleachers ascending upward as in an outdoor stadium. The rows are occupied by high school graduating STUDENTS in caps and gowns. THEY sit facing the audience -- their audience also -- and at the sound of a pitchpipe THEY ALL rise and sing:

STUDENTS
BEHOLD THE HILLS OF TOMORROW!
BEHOLD THE LIMITLESS SKY!
FLING WIDE THE GATES
TO A WORLD THAT WAITS!
AS OUR JOURNEY STARTS,
BEHOLD! OUR HEARTS
ARE HIGH!

BETWEEN THE HILLS OF TOMORROW,
AT TIMES THE ROADS MAY SEEM STRANGE ...
THE HILLS LIE DEEP,
AND THE WAY IS STEEP,
BUT FOR THOSE WHO DARE
THE WORLD IS THERE
TO CHANGE.

SO RAISE THE TORCH
AND SEIZE THE DAY!
BEHOLD! OUR BANNERS FLY
TO MARK THE WAY!
STANDARDS BILLOWING,
UNSULLIED, PROUD ...
VISIONS BRIGHT ...
VOICES LOUD ...

BEYOND THE HILLS OF TOMORROW
ARE SKIES MORE BEAUTIFUL STILL!
BEHOLD! BEGIN!
THERE ARE WORLDS TO WIN!
MAY WE COME TO TRUST
WHAT DREAMS WE MUST
FULFILL!

(A YOUNG MAN, in cap and gown, comes out of the front row and stands Center

Stage at a lectern facing the audience. Lights remain full on the STUDENTS in the bleachers but are dim Downstage where the YOUNG MAN stands, placing him in an almost silhouette effect.

The ANTHEM continues underneath, in the orchestra)

YOUNG MAN
Every person here is certainly familiar with that song.

(Applause)

And as President of the Lake Forrest Academy Graduating Class of 1980 it is my privilege indeed to present its illustrious composer, Franklin Shepard, who wrote that melody for his own Commencement here, with the words by his friend, classmate and collaborator, Charles Kringas. That was long ago. 1955. Although none of us here were born yet.

But it was the year Frankin Shepard went from Lake Forrest to the Juilliard School in New York and on to the world. Ladies and gentlemen, our distinguished alumnus, the great composer and Academy Award winner, Mr. Franklin Shepard.

(FRANKLIN SHEPARD enters to thunderous applause and a standing ovation. Taking short quick bows and raising his hands in nervous acknowledgment, HE hurries across the dimly lit front edge of the stage and shakes hands with the YOUNG MAN, who retreats to his seat in the bleachers. FRANK, in a tuxedo, is played by an 18 year old. HE bows to the audience, then to the STUDENTS, and stands nodding his head as THEY sit)

FRANK
(Speaks quickly, excitedly, even nervously)
May I begin by saying it is shocking to be told the last time I stood here was twenty-five years ago. See, I simply do not relate to being forty-three years old. Or at least I wouldn't if my new bride -- who is very young --
(Smiles charmingly)
-- didn't seem to remind me almost daily.

(ALL laugh. Lights slowly come up stronger on FRANK and somewhat dimmer on the bleachers)

(ALL laugh)

I am flooded with memories. Disturbing. Wonderful. Upsetting. Glorious. This school has been a well of wisdom for me from which I've drawn for the rest of my life. Here were my first performances. My first compositions.

(Turns to the STUDENTS behind him)
So if people ask you how I was today, you can tell them "traumatically overwhelmed."

(ALL laugh. HE turns back to the audience)
What I remember most of all, having been introduced so splendidly by this year's Valedictorian, is that being Valedictorian
(Imitating previous speaker)
-- "way back in 1955"

(ALL laugh)

-- was my first award.
(Holds up ring and shows it)
And winning the Academy Award was my last Award. You're looking to see if I'm wearing that, too, huh?

(ALL laugh. FRANK's voice starts to sound slightly hollow, like an echo)

That touches me. When I see the word "award," I see "a" "ward." Something you must take care of. But awards are merely symbols. What's actually meaningful about an award is what it represents. Love.

(VAMP. A GIRL in the bleachers stands up and starts taking off her cap and gown and putting on the accessories befitting a 40-year-old woman: MARY)

MARY
I'd like just a big glass of vodka, no ice, and no advice.

(VAMP. A SECOND GIRL rises and also starts removing cap and gown)

TERRY
You want to talk about hard?
(CHORD)
Let me tell you what's hard.
(CHORD)
Running a home and managing a career ...
(Adds accessories as a THIRD GIRL starts to remove cap and gown, but does not rise)

3RD GIRL
(Sings)
YESTERDAY IS DONE ...

TERRY
... that's what's hard ...

Which one has to go?

1ST BOY (LES)
(To a 2ND BOY next to him, as HE too starts removing cap and gown)
Here's what I do. Now listen to me and you'll save money. I never offer to pay when I'm with a group or a client or someone I'm doing business with. Soon as the check comes, I real fast say, "Now who do I have to thank for this?"
(Adds accessories as the 2ND BOY starts to remove cap and gown; THEY remain seated)

3RD GIRL
SEE THE PRETTY COUNTRYSIDE ...

MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG,
ROLL ALONG ...

BURSTING WITH DREAMS ...

2ND BOY (RU)
Hah!

LES
(Interrupting)
Try it.

4TH GIRL
(Changing clothes like the OTHERS, not rising)
TRAVELLING'S THE FUN ...

FRANK
(More echo)
... I am everywhere surrounded by ... love ...

3RD BOY
(Rising, becoming TOM)
I keep telling my kids they have to struggle doubly hard to get work today. They're not minorities.

GIRLS 3 & 4
FLASHING BY THE COUNTRYSIDE ...

FRANK
(Overlapping)
... I have walls filled with love. Mantels brimming with love ...

MARY, GUSSIE
GIRLS 3 & 4
EVERYBODY MERRILY,

MERRILY ...

GATHERING DREAMS ...

+ LES & RU
ROLLING ALONG ...

+ TOM
ROLLING ALONG!

+ TERRY & ALEX
ROLLING ALONG!

5TH GIRL
(Rising, becoming GUSSIE to 6TH GIRL)
I'm divorced, I'm over forty, I've got some money. I think I'll get a face lift.

FRANK
... cases and cabinets of love ...

4TH BOY
(Becoming ALEX to GUSSIE)
You're not serious. You look half that.
Don't do it.

GUSSIE
(Holding up the corners of her face to demonstrate)
It would look like this.

ALEX
(After a beat)
Do it.
(Rises and starts changing)

5TH BOY
(Becoming JEROME)
Style's what they used to have in my day.
Today, hah, anything eccentric passes for style.

(Sudden silence. The light Downstage is now bright enough for us to see that FRANK is the same age as the STUDENTS)

FRANK
(No echo)
... And when I think of love, I think of my music teacher here, rest his soul, who first told me that "Everyone is an artist." Everyone. And that it's not enough for someone to paint his masterpiece, or play his masterpiece, or write his masterpiece. All of that will come, will just fall into place ...
(Echo)
... if you make your life your masterpiece.

(A beat)

ADULTS
DREAMS MAY DIE,
BUT YOU'RE AS YOUNG AS YOUR DREAMS.

DUET
(Becoming ADULTS as THEY sing)
KEEP AN EYE ON YOUR DREAM,
GIVE IT CARE,
GIVE IT TIME.

ADULTS & DUET
TIME GOES BY
AND DREAMS GO DRY,
BUT YOU DON'T GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS.

FRANK
(With echo, as THEY hold the note)
That old man, my music teacher ...
(HE laughs)
... who was probably exactly my age today ... was the one person I wanted to be like ...

(A beat, during which EVERYONE freezes)

6TH GIRL	BOY ADULTS	FRANK
TEND YOUR DREAM.	SOME ROADS ARE EASY.	And when I began composing, my plan was to repay
DREAMS TAKE TIME.	SOME ROADS ARE ALL UPHILL.	the world for bumping into that great man and some day just stop ...
TIME GOES BY.	SOME ROADS YOU PLOD ALONG WITH A WILL.	and go back ... and teach what
	SOME ROADS YOU TRAVEL JUST FOR THE THRILL.	that great man taught me. But along the way
TWO DUETS		I also bumped
BEND YOUR DREAM WITH THE ROAD.	ALL ADULTS SOME RIDES ARE BREEZY.	into success and fame.
	SOME RIDES ARE FULL OF JIGGLES AND BUMPS.	
	CAN'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN IN THE DUMPS.	I suddenly found myself in music publishing ...
DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN IN THE DUMPS!	DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN IN THE DUMPS!	and then the recording business ... and ultimately producing films ...

TWO DUETS
+ FOUR
JUST ROLL ...

ALWAYS ROLL
...

... EVERYBODY
ROLL!

KEEP AN EYE
ON YOUR
DREAM
AS YOU'RE
TRAVELLING ...

ALL ADULTS (Continued)
SOME ROADS ARE EASY ...

SOME RIDES ARE BREEZY ...

SOME ROADS ARE ALL
UPHILL ...

SOME RIDES ARE FULL OF
BUMPS ...

OTHERS
(SOME becoming
ADULTS)
KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO
DO,
WHERE YOU'RE WILLING
TO GO,
WHAT YOU REALLY WANT
TO SEE ...

7TH GIRL
(Becoming MEG)
God, Mother. All you seem to think about is money.

8TH GIRL
(Becoming KATE)
Well, maybe that's why you don't have to think about it.

6TH BOY
(Becoming TED)
What's amazing is that all the people I know never had any money problems until they had money.

7TH BOY
(Becoming JOE
JOSEPHSON)
Show business. Listen, the whole world is in show business. And the winners are the ones who understand the important word there is "business."

(FANFARE from the orchestra)

JEROME
Let me tell you something about Frank Shepard.
(FANFARE)
He's a lot more than a songwriter)
(FANFARES continue)
He's the kind of man that shapes this country. And who's going to tell me we don't need more people like <u>that</u>?

(VAMPS begin)

9TH GIRL
(Becoming BETH)
I can remember twenty-five years ago when we were just beginning. Everybody was talking about what they wanted to <u>do</u>, and he was talking about what he wanted to <u>be</u>.

8TH BOY
PICK YOURSELF A ROAD

GET TO KNOW THE COUNTRYSIDE.

SOON ENOUGH, YOU'RE MERRILY, MERRILY ...

PRACTICING DREAMS ...

+ ONE VOICE
DREAMS THAT WILL

EXPLODE ...

+ TWO VOICES
WAKING UP THE COUNTRYSIDE ...

+ FOUR VOICES
MAKING YOU FEEL MERRILY,
MERRILY,

WHAT CAN GO WRONG,

ROLLING

ALONG?

ALL
SOME ROADS ARE SOFT AND SOME ARE BUMPY,
SOME ROADS YOU REALLY FLY.
SOME RIDES ARE ROUGH AND LEAVE YOU JUMPY,

10TH GIRL
(Becoming GWEN)
The guy's a pro.

LES
And he's good copy.

GWEN
Show me a pro who isn't.

KATE
He is always so sweet ...

MEG
The first time I met him I told him I liked older men. And he just stared at me. I guess older people don't know they're older.

KATE
So sweet ...

KATE
If I wasn't married, I'd tell you how sweet I think he is.

But I am.

So I'm not.

FRANK
But I like to think in going into business that I opened up the way for many people to make their lives their masterpiece.

FRANK
Anyway, I remember more than just one man's philosophy from my days here.

FRANK
I remember school is also where you learn to learn.

And friendship.

And trust.

ALL (Continued)
WHY MAKE IT TOUGH
BY GETTING GRUMPY?
PLENTY OF ROADS TO TRY.

GROUP I
SOME ROADS ARE SOFT
AND SOME ARE BUMPY,
SOME ROADS YOU REALLY
FLY.
SOME RIDES ARE ROUGH
AND LEAVE YOU JUMPY,
WHY MAKE IT TOUGH
BY GETTING GRUMPY?
PLENTY OF ROADS TO TRY.

SOME ROADS YOU REALLY FLY.

GROUP II
ONE
TRIP, ALL YOU GET IS
ONE QUICK RIDE.
LOOK AROUND A BIT.
ONE QUICK RIDE
THROUGH THE
COUNTRYSIDE.
STAY ON THE TRACK.

NEVER LOOK BACK.

GWEN
He gets points for making it. A lot of it doesn't matter if you really make it.

ALL
(In groups)
SOME ROADS ARE BUMPY,
NO DISPUTING IT --
BUMP! WHAT WAS THAT?
AN UNPAID BILL.
BUMP!
WHAT'S THE POINT IN --
BUMP!
-- REFUTING IT?

GWEN
To me, anyway.

And to you, if you've got any sense.

ALL
(In groups)
BUMP!
THERE'S A MORTGAGE.
BUMP!
A RECESSION.
BUMP!
MAKING --
BUMP!
-- A BAD IMPRESSION.
BUMP! BUMP!
WHAT WAS THAT?
THE WRONG PROFESSION.
OH. THAT ONE'S THE ONE THAT CAN KILL.
BUMP! BUMP! BUMP!
A DEMOTION.
BUMP!
A WAR.
BUMP!
AN EMERGENCY DOWN AT THE STORE.

ALL (Continued)

(In groups)
BUMP! BUMP!
NOW THE DOCTOR AT THE DOOR ...
BUMP!
AND MORE.
SO MUCH MORE ...
DREAMS TAKE TIME ...
DON'T GET SORE ...
NEVER LOOK BACK ...
WHAT ON EARTH FOR? ...
ONLY ONE QUICK TRIP, THAT'S IT --
EVERYBODY ROAR!
ROAR!

(FANFARE. There are now no kids left, only ADULTS)

MEN
Can we go now?

(FANFARE)

FOUR WOMEN
Did you check the doors?

MEN
Yes.

FOUR OTHER WOMEN
Check the lights?

MEN
Yes.

FOUR OTHER WOMEN
Check the kids?

MEN
Yes.

WOMEN
In a minute.

(THEY sit. FANFARE)

FRANK
All this around me was my foundation. And not of straw nor of clay, but a foundation built on ...

(FANFARE)

KATE
(Standing)
I hate this dress.

ALEX

(Standing)
I hate this tie.

6TH GIRL

(Standing)
I hate these shoes.

9TH BOY

(Standing)
I hate this vest.

4TH GIRL

(Standing)
I hate this top.

JEROME

(Standing)
I hate this jacket.

KATE, GIRLS 4 & 6

You look wonderful.

9TH BOY, ALEX, JEROME

You do, too.

ALL

(Turning front)
I do not.

(FANFARE)

MARY

(Standing)
I can't stand parties where all the people work the party to get ahead. Actually, I can't stand parties period. Actually, I can't stand people period. Actually, I think I'll have another drink. Period.

(FANFARE)

MEN

(Standing)
Ready?

WOMEN

(Standing)
Check the sitter?

MEN

Yes.

WOMEN

Check the tickets?

MEN

Yes.

WOMEN

Check the service?

MEN

Yes.

WOMEN

(Sitting)
In a minute.

MEN

Oh, my God.

(Huge FANFARE)

ALL

(Looking at FRANK, WOMEN rising)
Hey, Frank!!!

(FANFARE)

BENDING WITH THE ROAD,
GLIDING THROUGH THE COUNTRYSIDE,
MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG,
ROLL ALONG,
CATCHING AT DREAMS,
DREAMS THAT WILL EXPLODE,
WAKING UP THE COUNTRYSIDE.
EVERYBODY MERRILY,
MERRILY
SING 'EM YOUR SONG,
ROLLING ALONG!
ROLLING ALONG!
ROLLING ALONG!
ROLLING A --

(The stage explodes with talk --
cocktail party talk)

ACT I

Scene 2

The set has become a glorious Bel Air, California living room with stairs leading to the bedrooms above.

A cocktail party is in progress. A continuous BABBLE, rising and falling with the MUSIC, sometimes continuing into silences. TED is at the piano, RU leaning on it, looking at the crowd. JEROME is playing backgammon with someone. FRANK lounges at the top of the stairs, surveying all.

The time is one year earlier.

TERRY
(To somebody)
SO WE BOUGHT THIS LITTLE CONDOMINIUM ...

KATE
(To somebody else)
SO WE FOUND THIS LITTLE CHINESE GARDENER ...

LES
(To somebody else)
IT'S A CLEAR CASE OF STUDIO POLITICS ...

MEG
(To somebody else)
WE WERE STUCK ON THE FREEWAY TILL HALF PAST SIX ...

TERRY
(To somebody else)
SO WE BOUGHT THIS LITTLE CONDOMINIUM ...

ALL
GREAT.
HMMM ...
YEAH.

(ALEX takes a hefty SNORT of cocaine)

PARTY!!!
(VERY LOUD BABBLE)

FRANK
LIFE IS SWINGING,
SKIES ARE BLUE AND BELLS ARE RINGING.

FRANK (Continued)
EVERY DAY I WAKE UP SINGING,
"LOOK AT ME, I'M RICH AND HAPPY!"

DAYS ARE SUNNY,
WORKING HARD FOR LOTS OF MONEY,
FILLED WITH PEOPLE SMART AND FUNNY,
FILLED WITH PEOPLE RICH AND HAPPY.

WHO SAYS "LONELY AT THE TOP"?
I SAY, "LET IT NEVER STOP!"
IT'S MY TIME:
COMING THROUGH,
ALL MY DREAMS COMING TRUE.
GORGEOUS HOUSE, GORGEOUS WIFE,
WHO WANTS ANYMORE FROM LIFE ?

SKIES ARE BEAMING,
FUTURE WIDE AND PROSPECTS GLEAMING.
BEST OF ALL, I DON'T STOP DREAMING
JUST BECAUSE I'M RICH
AND HAPPY,
AND -- OH, YES --
FAMOUS, TOO!

(BABBLE continues; ORCHESTRA continues for a moment, then drops out; only TED's PIANO underscores the dialogue)

KATE
(Goes to FRANK on the steps)
Oh, Frank, I am paralyzed with joy tonight. And I cannot tell a lie, so you look very young and very handsome.

FRANK
Ah. I need to hear that today. Only this morning I was asked to come back and speak at my old high school's commencement next year ... I will have been out twenty-five years.

KATE
Be still, my heart. You going to go?

FRANK
(Laughing)
Only if there's a disaster in my life and I need some good press.

KATE
Oh, come, come, my dear. This is your year.

(As THEY hit the bottom of the steps, TED looks up and immediately launches into the introduction of "GOOD THING GOING". Some GUESTS applaud FRANK.

FRANK waves them away with an "Aw, shucks" gesture. RU, a young Latin fellow standing at the piano, starts to hum along sexily in KATE's direction)

KATE (Continued)
And his year. The way your little discovery there registered with only that tiny little scene in the movie --

RU
(Moving his body ever so slightly, still looking at KATE
BUH-BUH-BUH-BUH-BUH-BUH-BUM
BUH-BUH-BUH-BUM
WE HAD A GOOD THING GOING ...
(Under his breath, to TED)
WHICH ONE IS THAT ONE?

TED
(Continuing to play)
THAT ONE'S THE RICH ONE.

RU
MARRIED TO WHICH ONE?

TED
(Indicating ALEX with his head)
THAT ONE, THE FAT ONE.

RU
(Jazzy, still sexy, still to KATE)
BOO-BOO-BOOP-A-DOO
BOOP-A-DOO-BOOP-A-DOO ...

KATE
(Imitating him, flirtatiously)
BOO-BOO-BOOP-A-DOO-BA-
BOO-BOO-BOOP!

ALL
PARTY!

(PIANO MUSIC continues under. A single woman, MARY FLYNN, in her forties, takes our attention as SHE stands alone swaying rather drunkenly to the piano music. From time to time someone in the room passes her and smiles

and SHE smiles back with a smile so big and broad and artificial it is insulting. And often it is followed by letting her tongue hang out in disapproval. SHE is holding her drink high and moving to the piano in time to the music)

MARY
(Lifting her drink in RU's direction)
Know what I'm having?

RU
What?

MARY
Not much fun. Listen, we shouldn't get too upset. After all, it's only life. But it's like if he plays one more depressing thing.
(With an enormous frown)
Who wrote that song?

RU
The host.

MARY
(Without dropping her frown)
It's wonderful.

(RU laughs)

What's your name?

RU
Ru. Like in Rueben.

MARY
My name is Mary. Like in 'good old Mary'. Ru, if you were some Russian vodka where would you be?

RU
There's a bar over there in the corner. It's got everything.

MARY
So have you.

RU
Excuse me.

MARY
I was being a brat. I am a forty-two year old brat. Is this empty cup yours?

RU
It was.

MARY
Could I just use it so everybody doesn't know all my business? I want to have one little double and that's it. Oh, God, now you're going to think I'm a drunk, right? Wonderful. And the fact is I'm not, for your or anybody else's information. I happen to be a Catholic.

(As SHE crosses to the bar, SOMEONE tosses a flower in her empty cup. SHE looks up to see ALEX, who has thrown it smilingly at her as HE pours champagne for a GROUP OF THREE, including his daughter MEG. ALEX wears glasses, has an earring and much jewelry and is in a caftan. HE is enormously fat and, as the show goes backwards, will be thinner in each scene. MARY smells the flower, holds it up to him in acknowledgment and when HE looks away SHE tosses it over her shoulder and arrives at the bar. To bartender)

In my coffee cup if you don't mind.

(Loud whisper, indicating RU)

That guy over there who is not too bad in the looks department is just crazy about me but he hates it when I drink.

(ORCHESTRA under)

ALEX

(To his GROUP)

PERFECT HOUSE,
PERFECT WIFE --
I'M IMPRESSED.

(Someone yells "Hi!" to someone)

THAT FRANKLIN
IS HE NOT THE BEST?

(Someone else yells "Hi!")

I ASK YOU,
AREN'T YOU IMPRESSED?

MEG

JEALOUS, DADDY, HM?

WOMAN

(Overlapping)

DON'T TELL ME!

MAN

(Overlapping)

ARE YOU KIDDING?

TRIO

(Chuckling)

HM-HM ...

TERRY
(Overlapping)
SO WE BOUGHT THIS LITTLE CONDOMINIUM ...

(MUSIC stops, only the BABBLE continues; EVERYBODY changes places except for TED and RU who stay at the piano, and MARY who remains at the bar; FRANK is now playing backgammon with JEROME; MEG has her hand on his shoulder. Suddenly the MUSIC resumes, as does the activity; TERRY is now addressing somebody else)
SO WE BOUGHT THIS LITTLE STRING OF LAUNDROMATS ...

ALL
GREAT ...
SMOG ...
POINTS ...

(TWO PEOPLE in different parts of the room SNORT cocaine or PUFF marijuana)

JEROME
(Front, rattling the dice)
THESE ARE THE MOVERS,
THESE ARE THE SHAPERS,
THESE ARE THE PEOPLE
THAT FILL THE PAPERS.

(JEROME rolls the dice)

RU
(Front)
MAKING IT ...

LES
(Front)
WE ARE THE FRIENDS OF FRANK ...

RU
EVERYBODY'S MAKING IT ...

LES
(As JEROME clicks his backgammon man rhythmically, taking one of FRANK's off the board)
WE ALL HAVE FRANK TO THANK.

RU
... EVERYBODY'S GOT THAT HOT AND HUNGRY LOOK IN THEIR EYE.

MARY
(Front, overlapping)
THESE ARE THE MOVERS,
THESE ARE THE SHAPERS,
THESE ARE THE PEOPLE
THAT GIVE YOU VAPORS ...

(PIANO and ORCHESTRA continue under)

ALEX
There are oceans of champagne. This is all so festive a person would think we were going to see some fabulous and important movie premiere.

(Someone yells "Hi!")

KATE
(To LES, indicating MEG)
And just wait until you see our darling child in it. I mean gird your loins.

MEG
Mother!

KATE
(Sighs, to LES)
TWENTY YEARS AGO, WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT -- ?
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT
WE'D BE STANDING HERE?
I WAS STARVING AND LIFE WAS FRAUGHT,
YOU WROTE NOVELS AND DRANK ...

RU
MAKING IT ...

KATE
NOW YOU REPRESENT FRANK ...

RU
EVERYBODY'S MAKING IT ...

KATE
AND I'M HIS PERSONAL BANK.

WE BOTH HAVE FRANKLIN TO THANK ...

JEROME
THESE ARE THE MOVERS,
THESE ARE THE SHAPERS,
THIS IS THE A-LIST ...

RU
(Overlapping)
EVERYBODY'S MAKING IT ...

ALL
(Except MARY and RU)
LIFE IS SWINGING ...

KATE
GOD, I LOVE PARTIES!

ALL
SKIES ARE BLUE AND BELLS ARE RINGING ...

KATE
DON'T YOU LOVE PARTIES?

ALL
EVERY DAY I WAKE UP SINGING:

KATE
I JUST LOVE PARTIES!

ALL
"LOOK AT ME, I'M RICH AND HAPPY!"

MEG
(Eighteen, pretty, Eastern-seaboard)
GOSH, HE'S ATTRACTIVE.
GOSH, HE'S SO SMART.
GOSH, IT'S EXCITING BEING HERE --
GOSH, IT'S MY START!
THIS IS MY FIRST PREMIERE --
(Catches RU looking at her)
I SHOULD BE ACTING LOOSER.
GOSH, THIS IS MY FIRST AFFAIR
(Looking down again at FRANK, fondly)
WITH A FIRST-RATE PRODUCER ...

(ORCHESTRA out; PIANO continues alone)

RU
(To MEG)
BOO-BOO-BOOP-A-DOO
BOOP-A-DOO-BOOP-A-DOO ...
(HE waits for a response; MEG just looks at him; BABBLE louder)

ALEX
(To another TRIO)
TWENTY YEARS KNOWN THE MAN --
PERFECT PRINCE.
I MEAN, SO PERFECT YOU COULD WINCE.
I MEAN NOW, IS HE NOT A PRINCE?

TRIO
(Overlapping)
JEALOUS, ALEX? HM? ...
YOU'RE TELLING ME ...
ARE YOU KIDDING? ...
HMM-HMM ...

ALEX
(Overlapping, as MARY passes with a drink)
Mary! Ohhhh. Darling, that last review you wrote. I do not have the words. I read it over and over.

MARY
Didn't you get it the first time?

ALEX
(Laughs)
Oh, how I wish you wrote fiction instead of reviewing movies. I'd love you to do our house last week when we thought we lost our little dog. Oh, you would have died. All of us searching the house, the yard, the neighborhood, everywhere. And you know what? I had forgot and left him in the car.

(PIANO out; ORCHESTRA under)

MARY
How can I get the rights. Excuse me, I promised that shy fellow at the piano I'd bring him some coffee.

ALEX
See you later.

MARY
(Leaving)
Oh, I hope so.

ALL
(Except MARY and RU, who keeps looking at MEG)
DAYS ARE SUNNY,
WORKING HARD FOR LOTS OF MONEY,
FILLED WITH PEOPLE SMART AND FUNNY,
FILLED WITH PEOPLE RICH AND HAPPY!

(ORCHESTRA out; PIANO alone)

RU
(To TED, still looking at MEG)
WHO'S THE REAL BRIGHT ONE ?

TED
(Continuing to play)
ASK YOUR EMPLOYER.

RU
(Referring to JEROME)
WHO'S THE UPTIGHT ONE ?

TED
THAT ONE'S HIS LAWYER

TED (Continued)
(Punctuating with ad. lib. chords, indicating various people)
AND THAT ONE'S HIS AGENT
AND THAT ONE'S HIS BANKER
(Indicating LES)
AND THAT ONE'S HIS PRESS MAN,
WHO HANDLES HIS PRESS,
AND WHERE IS HIS YESMAN?
(Pretending to look around)
HE MUST HAVE A YESMAN --
(Remembers)
OH, YES --
(Final punctuation; HE stops playing; BABBLE only for a beat)

RU
You making any money?

TED
Sure.

RU
Then shut up.

(ORCHESTRA -- loud)

ALL
PARTY!!
(ALL change positions again except KATE, LES, RU and the BACKGAMMON GROUP. PIANO: "GOOD THING GOING", RU humming along)

MEG
(Referring to the backgammon game)
Franklin, if this were my house, if these were my guests, I wouldn't keep them --

FRANK
(Sitting quickly up from the game)
Damn. Damn, damn, damn.

JEROME
(A very dapper attorney -- charming, skillfull, and in some way we know HE can be a killer)
That's two thousand. I'll take a check.

FRANK
(Taking out checkbook and pen)
And I will deduct it as attorney fees.

MEG
Franklin, you don't play backgammon when you have invited people to a cocktail party.

FRANK
(Looking at JEROME)
Did that invitation say "cocktail party" or "drinks before my premiere"?

MEG
(Putting her hand on FRANK's)
Frank?

FRANK
(Writing check now; takes her hand away)
Meg, be a good girl. I'm trying to write a bad check.
(Hands check to JEROME)

JEROME
(To MEG)
After producing this movie he joins an income bracket that is limited to oil barons and drug pushers.
(Starts setting up game)

FRANK
(Very flat, bland, sarcastic)
Yes, isn't it wonderful? Now I have everything I've ever wanted. I have nothing more to wish for. My every want, my every dream, has finally come true.

MEG
I guess that's meant sarcastically, Franklin, but it's true.

FRANK
(Takes MEG's chin with one hand)
God, Jerome, don't you wish you could put on <u>your</u> eighteen year old glasses and see life the way Meg does?

MEG
Sorry I praised you. I'll play, Jerome.

(ORCHESTRA in loud; PIANO out)

KATE
(To LES, indicating a flamboyant type)
TWENTY YEARS AGO HE PARKED CARS.

LES
(Indicating a hoody type)
HE WIPED BARS.

KATE
(Indicating a vacuous type)
SHE WAS OUT OF IT.

KATE, LES
NOW YOU LOOK AT THEM: SUPER STARS,
WORTH THE NATIONAL DEBT.

FLAMBOYANT TYPE
(Front)
I MAKE CARS.

KATE, LES
EACH AS BIG AS YOU GET.

HOODY TYPE
(Front)
I OWN BARS.

KATE, LES
FRIENDS OF PRESIDENTS...

VACUOUS TYPE
(Front, drained)
I'M STILL OUT OF IT.

SECOND GIRL
TWENTY YEARS AGO I WAS SORTING MAIL...

RU
MAKING IT...

THIRD GIRL
I WAS WORKING SCALE...

RU
EVERYBODY'S MAKING IT...

THIRD BOY
I WAS OUT ON BAIL...

FOURTH GIRL
(Indicating someone to
her companion)
TWENTY YEARS AGO I WAS MARRIED TO HIM.

FIFTH GIRL
(Indicating someone to her companion)
HE WAS MARRIED TO YOU.

FOURTH BOY
(To his companion)
YOU WERE MARRIED TO ME.

ALL
TWENTY YEARS AGO WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT
WE'D BE SETTING THE TRENDS?

FIFTH BOY
I WAS STILL ON RELIEF.

ALL
WHO'D HAVE GUESSED WE'D BE FRIENDS?

FIFTH BOY
NOW I'M STUDIO CHIEF.

ALL
WHO CAN TELL WHERE IT ENDS?

SEVENTH GIRL
HI!

ALL
(Loud)
MAKING IT...

JEROME
KIDDIE TIME...

ALL
EVERYBODY'S MAKING IT...

MEG
GOD, HE'S ATTRACTIVE...

ALL
(Louder)
EVERYBODY'S LIFE IS SWINGING,
SKIES ARE BLUE AND BELLS ARE RINGING!

MARY
HAVEN'T I BEEN TO THIS PARTY BEFORE?
(ORCHESTRA out; TED at the PIANO)

BILL
(Coming over to FRANK)
I always thought it was just us jocks, you know? But here I am with the most successful people probably in this town, right? And all they can talk about is how it was when they were poor.
(BILL punches FRANK'S shoulder and walks away laughing. ORCHESTRA enters, PIANO continues, concerto style)

JEROME

(Front)
THESE ARE THE MAKERS,
THESE ARE THE DOERS,
THESE ARE THE REASON FOR INTERVIEWERS...

RU

(Front)
MAKING IT...

JEROME

KIDDIE TIME...

RU

EVERYBODY'S MAKING IT...

JEROME

KIDDIE TIME...
(ORCHESTRA and PIANO out;
TED sips a drink)

JEROME, RU

EVERYBODY'S GOT THAT HOT
AND HUNGRY LOOK IN THEIR EYE!
(ORCHESTRA briefly, then TED
resumes playing the PIANO)

(TERRY approaches)

TERRY
(An aging musical comedy queen with bleached bouffant hair and doing a comedy walk on her ankles indicating fatigue, approaches -- talking to, then kissing, FRANK)
I think the last of the old contract players here is falling apart.
(Kisses JEROME)
You got something on your nose, Jerome.

(JEROME touches his nose)

Your finger.
(TERRY laughs hysterically. THEY pretend to laugh)

FRANK
Terry, you know Meg who's starring in my picture.

TERRY
Not too gorgeous, huh? And don't feel bad you don't have bazooms like mine.
(Whistles, shaking wrist. ORCHESTRA in, PIANO out)
If God had meant for all women to have bazooms like these, he'd have put silicone in their training bras. Make it while you can, kid, you don't last long out here.

MEG
Thank you.

TERRY
(Imitating her manners)
Oh, well, tut-tut. I used to have class like that.
(Being funny TERRY sticks her finger up her nose and speaks)
See you in the movies. Which is more than you can say for me.
(Gushing, as PIANO comes in)
Is that Mary?

MARY
No.
(Turns from her to RU)
See, Ru, I can't marry you. No, I can't. I'm making too many changes in my life, so don't ask me.
(RU says nothing)
What?

ALEX
(To a NEW GROUP)
PERFECT HOUSE, PERFECT WIFE,
YES, MY DEAR --

KATE
(Bumping into MARY as SHE dances to the PIANO, buckling her knees and lifting her hands to show surprise)
HI! HI!

ALEX
AND YET, WELL,
GUESS WHO ISN'T HERE --

MARY
(Imitating KATE)
HI! HI!

ALEX
I MEAN, THE TIME IS DRAWING NEAR --
(Looks at watch)

TRIO
WICKED, ALEX -- !
OH, DON'T TELL ME -- !
ARE YOU KIDDING -- ?
HM-HMMMM...

MARY
(Simultaneously, seeing LES staring at her imitation, repeating it to him)
HI! HI!
(To MEG, looking at her)
HI, OH HI!
(The BABBLE thins perceptively and the MUSIC FADES OUT as SHE turns, about to continue the imitation to the next person in sight, but this turns out to be FRANK, who leans in and kisses MARY on the cheek, not noticing KATE, who turns him around and hugs him. When FRANK turns back MARY has moved, wiping off his kiss. The BABBLE stops completely. An embarrassed PAUSE)

TERRY
(Completely unaware, to another group)
SO WE BOUGHT THIS LITTLE PIECE OF PROPERTY...
(Dead SILENCE for a beat; then suddenly ALL turn front)

ALL
(Including MARY, JEROME, etc.)
DAYS GO ZIPPING,
EVERY LITTLE MOMENT'S GRIPPING,
OTHER TIMES IT'S LIKE YOU'RE TRIPPING,
HIGH ON BEING RICH AND HAPPY!

WORK'S FULFILLING,
EVEN WHEN YOU DON'T GET BILLING.
EVERY DAY YOU WAKE UP WILLING,
HAPPY TO BE RICH AND HAPPY!

WHO SAID ALL OUR DREAMS GET BURNED?
EVERY BIT OF THIS WAS EARNED!
IT'S OUR TIME,
(ORCHESTRA out)
COMING THROUGH --
(ORCHESTRA in)
ALL OUR DREAMS
COMING TRUE.
ALL OUR DAYS FULL OF BEANS,
THIS MUST BE WHAT HAPPY MEANS!

SKIES ARE BEAMING,
FUTURE BRIGHT AND PROSPECTS GLEAMING.
BEST OF ALL, YOU DON'T STOP DREAMING
JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE RICH
AND HAPPY
AND, MAYBE --
(Tiny TAP DANCE)
FAMOUS, TOO!

(GUSSIE enters the room calling down to EVERYONE as SHE takes off a wrap. SHE is in her forties, very well-bred, very animated, constantly laughing and hanging onto people. Everything is calculated to make you love her which is why you don't. SHE is married to FRANK)

GUSSIE
Oh my God, forgive me. Please God, forgive me. Am I not the perfect hostess? I mean, that is if anyone noticed I wasn't here.

FRANK
Everyone wondered where you were.

MARY
(To RU)
I didn't.

GUSSIE
Oh, why not tell!

(FRANK goes to kiss her on the cheek and SHE moves away seeming not to have noticed SHE missed the kiss)
I have been in beaucoup meetings for this fabulous dress line I've come up with.
(No response)
Yes, let's by all means contain ourselves. If you only knew how I was having to contain myself.

FRANK
I was going to suggest everybody leave now. It's getting there.

GUSSIE
Perfect. May we talk alone first for one big second?

KATE

(Opening compact, doing make-up before leaving)

Well first let me repair the damage. And I have warned my Meg to smile at the press and to say nothing. Didn't I, darling? Just smile and say nothing. Because in those situations with the tension and the craziness. Well, remember Charley Kringas? I will never --

(Catches herself and looks up horrified)

Oh, I'm --

MARY

It is so rewarding for once in my life not to have been the biggest horse's ass in the room. 'Charley Kringas' right out loud.

GUSSIE

(To MARY)

Drop it.

MARY

Does everyone here follow the tension or -- well, let me explain. Or is there a person alive who didn't hear about what Charley Kringas did on television? Well, then let me tell you.

GUSSIE

(Crosses, glaring)

Get out of here, drunk.

MARY

(Getting her things together to get up from her bar stool)

Gussie, when you make a face like that just know a cold wind might come along and freeze --

(While getting up SHE falls across the bar and knocks dozens of liquor bottles off of it as SHE slides to the floor, mostly out of sight. Getting up, leaning on the inside of the bar where SHE's been sitting. Attempting dignity)

Well now I probably won't be invited ba --

(The bar gives way under her weight and it goes over with her lying on top of it, and the rest of the glasses and things falling around her in a great and ugly mess. SHE tries to, but can't, get up. RU hurries over and helps her up)

GUSSIE

Get her out of here.

RU
(Grabbing MARY and gathering the things SHE dropped; purse, gloves)
C'mon. Let me get you home.

MARY
(Putting on a shoe that came off. Mockingly. Flailing arms)
Well, there goes my reputation.

FRANK
(Coming over, offering a hand)
Let me help?

MARY
(Pulls away from him)
Get away from me, you. You get away. Rich man, you are the poorest man I've ever known.

GUSSIE
Get her out of here, Frank. Get her out or I'll kill her.

RU
(To MARY, leading her out)
C'mon, we're going home.

MARY
(As RU almost carries her to the door, SHE struggles to turn around and speak. Finally SHE does)
Could I just say though -- could I just say how really -- I mean, I feel so ... cuz' you all know what I really think of you ...
(MARY holds up one hand and counts with the other, pulling down one finger at a time)
You are dull, you are dumb, you are drab, you are dopey --
(Only the middle finger stands. MARY pretends surprise with and "oops" and turns and exits)

FRANK
(To JEROME)
Let's get our coats.
(HE and JEROME start to the stairs, but GUSSIE stops FRANK as JEROME continues up the stairs and exits, getting coats)

GUSSIE
(Next to FRANK. Quietly)
You're to blame, Buster. You're to blame for this.

KATE
(Going toward the stairs)
She's just gone to hell in a handcart.

GUSSIE
One thing I've noticed about Frank and his friends. He only really seems to like them when they're down.

(JEROME appears with an armful of coats)

FRANK
Come on, it's late. Let's all go to a movie.

MEG
Franklin's right. Let's all go.
(MEG and FRANK start up the stairs)

GUSSIE
(Hurrying ahead of them to the top of the stairs)
Excuse me. Uh, just excuse me, please.
(Now at the top SHE turns and faces them coming up)
Just excuse me, all right? But this is my house. These are my guests. And that is my husband. I only mention all of this because you don't seem to know it.

KATE
(Making light of this)
Oh, Gussie, come, come. My daughter's eighteen years old. Pick on somebody your own age. Like me.

GUSSIE
Eighteen. Seems so young to be a tramp.

KATE
You watch that mouth.

FRANK
(Coming up the stairs with MEG)
Come on, everyone. I'm just calling this nonsense opening night nerves.

(THEY arrive at the top with GUSSIE)

GUSSIE
(Hitting him on the shoulder)
Do you mind if I call it something else?

FRANK
(Pointing a finger at GUSSIE, threateningly)
Stop it, you. Stop it right now.

GUSSIE
(Hitting his other shoulder)
No, you stop it right now. It's enough for you to do it behind my back but don't you dare think you can get away with it right in front of me.

MEG
May I say one thing, Gussie?

FRANK
(To MEG)
Be quiet.
(To GUSSIE)
You're embarrassing everyone. We're all embarrassed for you. Now this is Meg's big night. It's her first picture. First starring role. Don't do this.
(To PEOPLE below)
Let's just go, okay?

GUSSIE
Oh, God, I'd hate to ruin it. And I don't really think you're trying to take my husband away from me. Because if I did I'd do this.
(GUSSIE lunges at MEG on the balcony to shove her over the side. There is a scream from EVERYBODY. FRANK quickly pulls MEG out of the way to him and GUSSIE flies forward and grabs on a rail at the last second to keep from going over herself. EVERYONE stands watching her and FRANK stare, almost in fear, at each other. JEROME breaks the tension stepping out and speaking)

JEROME
Okay, everybody. Let's get our coats.
(Nobody moves)
Come on. We're going to be late.

FIRST TRANSITION

The COMPANY appears from all over the set.

COMPANY

DREAMS DON'T DIE
AND YOU'RE AS YOUNG AS YOUR DREAMS.
TIME GOES BY
AND DREAMS GO DRY
BUT YOU DON'T GIVE UP ON YOUR DREAMS ...

1979 ...
1978 ...
1977 ...

GROUP I
WATCH THE ROAD ...

GROUP II
NEW WINDS ARE BLOWING,
NEW STREAMS ARE FLOWING
(JUST DON'T EAT THE FISH) ...
HAVE A BABY NOW IF YOU WISH --
THEY CAN START ONE RIGHT IN A DISH.

FIRST WOMAN
(To SECOND WOMAN)
Oh, look at you with all your news! New hair color, and you're having a baby ...

SECOND WOMAN
Now don't tell a soul, but it's from a test-tube.

FIRST WOMAN
It's still a pretty color.

GROUP I
WATCH THE BUMPS.

BUMP!
BUMP BUMP!
BUMP!

GROUP II
GARBAGE IS GROWING,
SOME OF IT GLOWING ...
SOME OF IT FALLING INTO THE SEA.
TURN UP THE BEEGEES ON THE CB.
WATCH HOW YOUR CONGRESS WORKS ON TV ...

FIRST MAN
(To SECOND MAN)
Now the television cameras will be hidden up in the gratings, the sheik will be an FBI man, and the money will be placed in a suitcase. Now try and get him to pick up the suitcase. That's the most important part. Now how can you get him to pick up the suitcase?

SECOND MAN
I'll tell him that's where the money is.

FIRST MAN

Oh.

GROUP I

JUST ROLL.

GROUP II

HOT TUBS
AND SEX CLUBS
AND DEEP RUBS
AND OVERDUBS ...

GWEN

Although the vote was closer this year, once again the Equal Rights Amendment lost Illinois.

TERRY

I lost a part in a picture that could have been a comeback for me. I lost a TV series. And I lost a hundred and eighty pounds. My husband.

GROUP I

ROLL.

ALWAYS ROLL.

GROUP II

OIL SPILLS
AND OIL BILLS
AND NO FRILLS
AND WILBUR MILLS,
GAS QUEUES
AND CHRYSLER'S BLUES,
RUNNING SHOES
AND HOWARD HUGHES ...

KATE

I think I look pretty good for someone who's survived the "Me" Generation.

ALEX

I think you look wonderful. I only hope I look as good as you when I'm your age.

KATE

You don't look as good as me right now.

ALL

TRAVELLING'S THE FUN,
FLASHING BY THE COUNTRYSIDE,
EVERYBODY MERRILY MERRILY --

QUARTET

NINETEEN SEVENTY-SIX ...

ALL

JIMMY'S ELECTED,
CONCORDE CONNECTED,
DISCO IS DEAD AND WON'T DISAPPEAR.
WHO ARE THESE ARABS, WHY ARE THEY HERE?
QUICK, GIVE A BICENTENNIAL CHEER:

DUET

(Softly)
HIP HIP HIP HOORAY ...

TRIO
NINETEEN SEVENTY-FIVE ...

(And into Scene 3)

ACT I

Scene 3

The WAITERS in the Polo Lounge set are wearing red jackets, bring large menus and carry enormous trays. There is one harassed BUSBOY, whom we will see ultimately is RU, kept shockingly overworked throughout the scene, but HE is up to it.

The room is filling up with PEOPLE at the top of the scene but should be jammed with PEOPLE at the close.

It is 1975. Five years earlier than the previous scene.

GEORGE (HEADWAITER)
(As MARY enters, looking around)
Yes, m'am. How do you do?

MARY
(SHE was just about to exit. Nervous, out of place, but in much more control than in the last scene)
Yes, uh, do you have a reservation made in the name of a Charley Kringas?
(SHE shrugs and looks around the room as GEORGE looks in the reservation book)

GEORGE
(Looking up, then tracing the names with his finger)
Kringas, Kringas. No, no reservation made in that name.

MARY
Perfect. Then he'll be here. He always forgets the ones he makes.

(GEORGE looks up at her from book)

May I -- have a table for two.
(Silent pause)
I hope.

GEORGE
Certainly, madame.
(HE leads her across the room and seats her as GUSSIE enters in sun-glasses, looking behind her

apprehensively. SHE spots GEORGE seating MARY and hurries over to them, sitting down, shielding herself behind GEORGE)

GUSSIE
(To MARY)
DARLING!
DELIVER ME, DARLING!
(Intermittently looking around GEORGE's body to the door)
IF I CAN JUST PARK HERE A SEC,
YOU CAN HAVE MY COOK.
(Indicating the entrance, as MARY looks baffled)
IT'S SO DARK NEAR THE CHECKROOM,
I DIDN'T LOOK ...
(Holding tightly onto GEORGE)
GEORGE, DON'T MOVE.
(Lowers glasses, registers surprise at the light)
OH.
(Looking back to the entrance)
GOOD, HE DIDN'T COME IN.

(MUSIC continues under)

The truth about places where <u>everyone</u> goes is that you don't want to see everyone.

MARY (Rising to leave)
I don't want to see <u>anyone</u>.

GUSSIE
(Reaching to sit MARY down)
DARLING!
YOU SAW HIM? POOR DARLING,
POOR JOE,
IT'S A SHAME WATCHING SOME-
ONE YOU LOVE GO "PLUNGE".

(MARY, visibly relieved, sits)

ALL THE SAME, HE'S BECOME
EL ETERNAL SPONGE --
YOU'RE SO <u>THIN</u>!
(Looking over the sunglasses at the entrance again)
NO, HE ISN'T COMING IN.

(MUSIC continues under)

Just <u>knowing</u> Joe Josephson means he's going to ten and twenty you to death.

GUSSIE (Continued)

OH, I KNOW WHAT I OWE HIM:
GOD, JUST EVERYTHING --
(Spotting somebody strange or strangely dressed)
EEK, WHO'S THAT? --
WELL, NOT QUITE EVERYTHING.
I'M HAPPY TO KNOW HIM --
GOD, ISN'T EVERYONE?
(Emphatically, sotto voce)
HE LIVES AT THE TRACK
(Looking toward the entrance again)
AND HE'S ALWAYS ON MY BACK ...

(GEORGE coughs discreetly, indicating her hold on his coat; MUSIC stops)

GEORGE

Excuse me. I must return.

(GUSSIE hastily lets him go; MUSIC resumes)

GUSSIE

(Letting him go)
Oh, George, I'm sorry. I'll go with you.
(Peeks around his body again, sings, to MARY)
DARLING!
FORGIVE ME FOR SNARLING,
BUT GO AND HAVE LUNCH IN A PLACE
AND YOUR LIFE IS IN DANGER.
(Glances at her watch)
LOOK AT THAT! I MUST RACE --
DARLING, DON'T BE A STRANGER.
YOU'RE A PEACH,
WE'RE AT THE BEACH,
AND DARLING, AS I SAID --
(Kisses her fingertip, then puts her finger on MARY's nose and makes another kissing noise)
CALL
AND WE'LL ALL BREAK BREAD.

(MUSIC stops; to GEORGE, sotto voce, as HE leads her to a nearby table)
Not there, George, nowhere near --
(Points behind her, concealing her finger with her body, and simultaneously spots, to her dismay, JOE coming unavoidably into the room, looking for her; MUSIC resumes)

GUSSIE (Continued)
I'm going to open my veins, I'm going to cut out my heart,
I'm going to throw myself under a --
(Without a break, in great surprise, to JOE)
JOE!
IS IT JOE?
IT COULD BE ANYONE,
YOU'RE SO THIN --
WELL, NOT JUST ANYONE.
BUT WHERE DID IT GO?
I EAT PROTEIN LIKE ANYTHING!
YOU MUST TELL ME HOW,
ONLY, PUSSY, NOT RIGHT NOW ...

(MUSIC continues under as SHE turns to leave)

JOE
You get my note at all, Gus? I want to cut you in on that project I'm lining up. Old time's sake.

GUSSIE
Joe, I haven't opened my mail in weeks. "Busy" is not the --
(Suddenly looking at GEORGE)
Oh, George, I'm sorry. You said that interview lady is where? On the patio?

GEORGE
(Getting it, smoothly)
Yes, m'am. On the patio.

GUSSIE
DARLING!
FORGIVE ME BUT, DARLING,
SHE'S THERE WITH HER QUILL,
I SHOULD SPRINT
OR SHE'LL BE IN A SWIVET
AND SHE'LL KILL ME IN PRINT,
WELL, THAT'S LIFE AND WE LIVE IT --
KEEP THE WEIGHT OFF
AND I HATE YOU
'CAUSE I FEEL SO FAT!
(Kisses the air in front of his face)
LOVE YOU JOE,
BUT YOU KNOW THAT.
(Throws a final kiss as SHE exits to the patio. MUSIC continues under)

GEORGE
A table, sir?

JOE
Ah, no. No, I don't think so.

MARY
(Hurrying over to JOE)
IS THAT JOE,
DARLING JOE?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER ME --
MARY FLYNN?
GOD, WHY REMEMBER ME?
IT'S SO LONG AGO,
BUT I REMEMBER IT.
YOU DID SAVE MY NECK,
AND I SHOULD HAVE MAILED A CHECK.
(Puts money in his hand; MUSIC fades)
That party in New York when I had my purse stolen? Finally there's your hundred back.

JOE
(Holding money)
Where was that?

MARY
Oh, my. I'm even more impressed you forgot. I'm glad I didn't. No more guilt.
(Shakes his hand)
And it's so good to run into you again. I'm really beholden.
(SHE hurries back to her table where SHE sits frozen. JOE takes the newspaper out of his pocket and quickly looks at his watch, then hurries over to GEORGE)

JOE
May I use your phone?

GEORGE
There's a phone right outside in the lobby, sir.

(JOE exits, checking the next race)

MARY
(To busboy, RU)
Waiter, could you bring me a double vodka on the rocks? Kind of fast.

RU
I'm just the busboy, m'am.

MARY
(Sneakily giving RU some money)
Here, kid, find a double vodka.

RU
(Trying to give back the money)
No, m'am, I can't --

MARY
(Searching in purse)
Keep it. You can do something for me some day.
(Gets out a cigarette as RU exits. MUSIC resumes. KATE, looking furtively back over her shoulder, is led to a table by GEORGE. SHE sees MARY; THEY exchange a wave. At the same time GUSSIE peeks in from the patio to see if the coast is clear; SHE and KATE spot each other and rush together excitedly)

GUSSIE
DARLING!

KATE
DARLING!

BOTH
(Big Dinah Shore kiss)
MWANH!
I'M GROSSLY LATE,

GUSSIE
DARLING!

KATE
DARLING!

BOTH
(THEY sit, or punctuate the MUSIC in some other way)
BUT THEN YOU DON'T KNOW
WHO I MET,
LURKING RIGHT OUTSIDE,
LOOKING SO SYMPATHETIC
I HAD TO HIDE.
(Rearing back)
WHAT, YOU TOO?
(Appraising each other)
DARLING, YOU'RE SO THIN!!
(THEY continue gossiping madly; MUSIC fades out under the following)

PAGE
(Enters with phone, calling)
Miss Flynn. Miss Mary Flynn. Miss --

MARY
(Very embarrassed)
Yes, here. What is it?

PAGE
Phone, Miss Flynn.

(MARY starts to get up to go for the phone but the PAGE, SHE notices, is plugging it in. PAGE then puts down the phone on the table)

MARY
(Picks up receiver)
Hellô? Hello?

CHARLEY
I would rather be announced than anything I can think of.

MARY
Yeah, well Charley, we have to go. C'mon.

(MARY stands up and CHARLEY sits her down)

CHARLEY
Go?
(Kisses her on the cheek)
That's from Evelyn.
(Looks at drink menu)
What're you having?

MARY
My just desserts. It's very important to me, Charley, that I go. Right now.

CHARLEY
Hey, I'm real impressed, Mary. You're not drinking.
(At that moment a nervous RU puts down drink. CHARLEY feigns astonishment)
And still you thought to order one for me.
(Just as HE's about to sip)
Who's here, Mary, that you don't want me to see?

MARY
Charley --

(SHE shrugs. CHARLEY has looked around and spotted GUSSIE with an 'oh')

MARY (Continued)
A moment ago she was right here. Charley, I don't want to have any big scene so let's just --

(SHE indicates the door. At that second GUSSIE spots CHARLEY and rises, indignant and furious, and strides from the room with KATE following)

Why did you do it, Charley?

CHARLEY
Because it was the truth.

MARY
(Mocking)
Oh, well, if it was the truth.

CHARLEY
It's not like I set out to get him, Mary. As I was waiting to be next on that show I sat there listening to how phenomenal he could be. How important. I started thinking about the waste. And suddenly I was on and -- the rest is my black day in history.

MARY
Well, Charley, how hard did you try to apologize?

CHARLEY
How hard? Mr. Nice Guy here 'how hard'? He wouldn't let me near him. For two years 'try to apologize' is what I did for a living.

MARY
(Suddenly gets it)
Wait a minute. That's not why we're here?

CHARLEY
I just want to see him. I know he comes here almost every day.

MARY
(Urgent)
Charley, don't you get it? It isn't just that you said it in front of 60 million people that --

CHARLEY
What are you talking about?

WAITER

May I take your order?

MARY

I'll have another one. Double. He'll have the same. And I'll drink this.

(MARY starts to drink, but CHARLEY puts his hand on her arm)

CHARLEY

(Sings)

HEY, OLD FRIEND,
WHAT DO YOU SAY, OLD FRIEND,
ARE WE OKAY, OLD FRIEND?
GIVE YOUR OLD FRIEND HERE A BREAK.
WHY SO GRIM?
WE'RE GOING ON FOREVER.
YOU, ME, HIM,
TOO MANY LIVES ARE AT STAKE.

FRIENDS THIS LONG
HAS TO MEAN SOMETHING'S STRONG,
SO IF YOUR OLD FRIEND'S WRONG,
SHOULDN'T MY OLD FRIEND COME THROUGH?
IT'S US, OLD FRIEND --
WHAT'S TO DISCUSS, OLD FRIEND?
HERE'S TO US,
WHO'S LIKE US -- ?

(Waits for her to respond, which SHE does, after a beat)

MARY

(Sings)

DAMN FEW.

(Drinks half her drink, while CHARLEY watches)

CHARLEY,
WHY CAN'T IT BE LIKE IT WAS?
I LIKED IT THE WAY THAT IT WAS,
CHARLEY,
YOU AND ME, WE WERE NICER THEN.

WE WERE NICE,
KIDS AND CITIES AND TREES WERE NICE,
EVERYTHING ...
I DON'T KNOW WHO WE ARE ANY MORE,
AND I'M STARTING NOT TO CARE.

LOOK AT US, CHARLEY,
NOTHING'S THE WAY THAT IT WAS.
I WANT IT THE WAY THAT IT WAS.
HELP ME STOP REMEMBERING THEN.

DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
IT WAS GOOD, IT WAS REALLY GOOD.

MARY (Continued)
PRETTY PLEASE, CHARLEY,
MAKE IT LIKE IT WAS.

(MARY sees that CHARLEY's gaze is frozen on the front door where FRANK has entered and is standing talking to GEORGE. MUSIC continues under)

CHARLEY
You really don't think I should just walk over there.

MARY
I cannot tell you how much I don't think you should just walk over over there.

CHARLEY
I think he'd like it.

MARY
As much as he liked you on T.V.

(CHARLEY whispers to the WAITER who brings a phone. MARY sings)

CHARLEY,
NOTHING"S THE WAY THAT IT WAS.
YOU WANT IT THE WAY THAT IT WAS.
I KNOW, THINGS WERE EASIER THEN.

DON'T YOU SEE, CHARLEY,
THAT'S WHAT EVERYONE DOES:
BLAMES THE WAY IT IS
ON THE WAY IT WAS.
ON THE WAY IT NEVER EVER WAS.

(SHE finishes her drink. CHARLEY makes a call)

FRANK
(Comes to the booth and sits with his back to CHARLEY. HE doesn't see him)
I'm really sorry I'm late.

LES
(The Press-Agent, easy, likeable, a loser)
There are some poeple you wait for. Right, Ms. Wilson? This is Franklin Shepard, our what-the-hell genius, huh? Gwen is doing the interview, Frank.

GWEN
Do you remember me from years ago, Mr. Shepard?

FRANK
Would you like me to, Ms. Wilson?

(WAITER hands FRANK a menu, and HE studies it)

CHARLEY
(On phone)
Franklin Shepard, please.

MARY
Charley, you're going to make it worse.

CHARLEY
I can't make it worse.

MARY
That's true. Shut up, Mary.
(MARY signals 'two more' to a WAITER)

GWEN
What do you feel about using first names?

FRANK
(Hands menu back to WAITER. Shaking head, no)
I think it's fine among friends, Ms. Wilson.

GWEN
Mr. Shepard, you're so successful now. Why do films?

FRANK
Honestly, because I feel I'm losing my signature I want to do a picture where I can say 'that's mine.' 'That's what I think.' 'That's who I am.' It's been a long time since I've been able to be personal in my work.

GWEN
But you've owned a property for years that Charles Kringas wrote. When are you going to make that?

FRANK
That is a movie that will never be made.

(At that moment the PAGE comes behind FRANK and begins to plug in a phone and LES shakes his head and mouths 'no calls.' The PAGE unplugs the phone and moves away, unseen by FRANK. CHARLEY watching with great dis-appointment, hangs up slowly)

GWEN
I trust I'm not stepping on any toes when I say the world is very anxious to see another project done by the two of you.

FRANK
The world will never see that project. May we change the subject, Ms. Wilson.

(Looks at watch. WAITER comes, pouring coffee for FRANK, GWEN and LES)

CHARLEY
Mary, this is nonsense. I'm going over there. It's the three of us.

MARY
No. Not any more. Now it's one and one and one.

(CHARLEY gets up. MARY gets him down)
Count twenty, Charley, and then we'll go out through the kitchen.

GWEN
May I ask one final question on the subject? That's all. I swear.

FRANK
Yes.

GWEN
Are you aware that Mr. Kringas is in this room?

FRANK
Yes.

(LES looks around. FRANK stays exactly as HE is)

GWEN
But I watched you come in. You haven't looked at this room once.

FRANK
My wife was just here.

CHARLEY
(Getting up)
Mary, for years I've been wrong. I've been on him and on him because he wasn't perfect. I gotta tell him I've been wrong.

MARY
(Pouring his drink into hers)
And I promise never to say I told you so.

(CHARLEY starts across the room)

GWEN
Mr. Shepard.

FRANK
Please call me Frank. I trust we're onto a new subject.

GWEN
Gwen. But I'm afraid it's the same subject. He's coming over.

(CHARLEY arrives at their table)

CHARLEY
Mr. Shepard, I presume.

FRANK
(Only directed to GWEN)
You know, Ms. Wilson, there's a tribe in Africa that when one of its members does something cruel or evil or betrays them they never see him again. They just ... don't see him. They never talk to him or hear him or acknowledge him in any way. For them he is dead. And I understand very often that's exactly what happens.

(FRANK takes GWEN's hand and shakes it, then LES's, then as though HE saw through CHARLEY, HE crosses to the door. CHARLEY, stunned, walks back to MARY, who is standing, waiting for him. Enroute to the door RU, the busboy, who has been pushing a cart covered with a tablecloth and setting on it a vase with a little rose, approaches FRANK with a large envelope)

RU
Mr. Shepard?

FRANK

Yes?

RU

I don't know, Mr. Shepard, if you remember me. Reuben? I'm the guy that's got the band and I sing and everything. You said if I get a demo record you'd hear it. So here. I hope you could listen.

(FRANK looks for a second then takes the record and hurriedly exits)

ACT I

Scene 4

FRANK is seated at the piano Down-stage Right at the proscenium arch playing the very last notes of "his song." When HE finishes, JEFFREY, standing over the piano, applauds with the audience and shakes FRANK's hand. JEFFREY is the host of the talk show that is in progress. Visible through-out are the vague outlines of the cameras and CREW.

JEFFREY

(With some humor. Chain-smoking throughout)

And may I say, sir, your playing matches your conversation.

(Now JEFFREY begins to walk and talk, almost teasing the clumsyness of it)

Now, via the magic of television, I'm ambling over to center stage where the lights are supposed to come up.

(They do, and there is CHARLEY seated in a chair. HE rises as JEFFREY approaches)

As the other side goes down.

(There is some difficulty and some tiny spill keeps FRANK in some light)

Or mostly down, as the case may be. And having met our famous composer we are now about to meet his famous lyricist.

(THEY shake hands and sit)

Is it lyrist or lyricist?

CHARLEY

Do I win the car if I answer right? It's as you said.

(A second then)

What was the question?

JEFFREY

You're not nervous?

CHARLEY

Who's not?

JEFFREY
(To the camera)
Anyway, as is consistent with our composer-lyricist series at the conclusion we will have the two on together with a medley of their work.
(To CHARLEY)
Now explain your contribution to our audience.

CHARLEY
(Mocking question)
Oh, well. It's totally, totally different from his. Totally. He goes ...
(HE does movement with his fingers playing piano)
And I go ...
(HE does the same movement with his fingers typing)

JEFFREY
Now Franklin Shepard told us how you met, how it was, the beginnings and all.

CHARLEY
Do you have the same satisfaction today that you had then?

CHARLEY
No.

JEFFREY
Do you find you both write better and easier now that you've been collaborating over fifteen years?

CHARLEY
No. I give wonderful interviews, don't I?

JEFFREY
Is there now a process of how you both work today that you can explain?

CHARLEY
Yes. I clean the house with my wife and we shop and read and eat and get the kids at school and we all eat some more and go to bed. Frank goes to the office and signs checks and goes to meetings and that's how we work today.

JEFFREY
You mean you are not working together these days.

CHARLEY

Good. You got it.

(Cups hand over mouth. Indicating FRANK)

You think he did?

(Sits back)

Is this weird. This is weird.

(Looking around. HE laughs)

No, no, I like this actually. I'm sure some people find out what they really think sitting up here. I'll try to be honest. If you'll handle the law suits.

JEFFREY

It sounds like you think making money is a bad thing for an artist.

CHARLEY

Being into money is the bad thing for the artist. For anybody. You cannot go for money. The money,

(Indicating FRANK)

he's so tired of hearing this,

(Back to JEFFREY)

but the money's got to come as a reward. If it's gotta come at all. You cannot work for money. Money is very dangerous. Money is what God meant when He said 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me.'

(Pointing to himself then the sky on this)

And are you going to question me when I am quoting God? Do you know the mail you will get?

CHARLEY (Continued)

(Looking up)

Thank you, God, we made our point.

(To JEFFREY)

She thanks you. But this money thing makes everybody crazy. You should see when Frank sees money ...

(HE does an imitation of a drooling, snorting octopus grabbing at lots of money)

JEFFREY

So then you're both happy when you work and the money comes out of that?

CHARLEY

No ... I'm not. Frank's happy. I mean, I want to be a serious playwright and here I've been writing words to tunes and that doesn't make me happy. And yet everytime I begin a play he arrives with a show and I now have this huge drawer filled with half plays. But, yeah, I think Frank is happy. But you want to see Frank's happy.

(HE turns to camera and sits there looking blank. Does a funny face and walk toward camera)

Do you want to see Frank?

(Sits)

Ask me anything ... about our work. You be me. Like me, complaining.

JEFFREY

(Being CHARLEY)

'You really serious about being happy with that song, Frank?'

CHARLEY

(Doing a wickedly accurate impersonation of FRANK so uptight being cool)

'Charley, you're gonna' cry all the way to the bank.'

(CHARLEY drops the character and sits doing choking sounds)

Ahhhhh. Do you know what that line does to me? Do you have any idea how often I hear that?

CHARLEY (Continued)
(CHARLEY falls dead to the floor. Gets up and sits, brushing himself off)
No, it's like this is my best friend in the cosmos. This is the guy who gave me my standards.
(Gets up and walks toward camera as if carrying something)
And now I'd like to lend them back for a while.

(THEY laugh. HE sits)

JEFFREY
Do you two have the same life outside? Do you share the same friends?

CHARLEY
(Imitating snotty people)
Oh, yes, don't you see me in all the society columns with him and his wife? I said to Frank last week I see his friends at a party he gives and it looks like a room full of white bread. Now don't misunderstand me. I like white bread. But I know it's not good for me. Ooooo, let me write that down.
(Feeling for a pencil)
I don't uh ... you don't either ...
(To camera)
Evelyn, write that down.
(Does Evelyn's reaction to that)
'Write it down yourself, Charley, I'm not your secretary.'
(Lowers head, doing his answer)
You're absolutely right, Evelyn.

JEFFREY
So then, actually, you're going through a period of not seeing each other much these days, in or out of work?

CHARLEY
(Shielding eyes and looking around)
You mean Frank? Is he here? Introduce us if you see him. I don't know if he'd recognize me.

JEFFREY
Now when you do work together do you begin with the music or --

CHARLEY
(Interrupting)
Wait, one second because I don't want to get in too deep here with my oldest and bestest. I think what's -- see we're not that kind of close, the way we used to be. And a friendship is like a ... garden. You have to water it and tend it and care about it. And you know what? I want it back. And it's important to explain, I think this is okay to say, that partly we went from the two of us to the four of us when we got married and Frank is divorced now and -- maybe like all those men who reach a certain age or place in the world and then

CHARLEY (Continued)
suddenly whop they're divorced. Maybe the reason you don't see the old friends or want the old wife is because they remind you of where you come from. Huh. I don't know. I'm just

(Does an imitation of someone blabbering by making a lot of fast word sounds)

JEFFREY
Well anyway, now let's hear the two of them play and sing some of their --

(HE has turned and HE and CHARLEY see, for the first time, as do we, that the piano bench is empty)

"MERRILY" (REPRISE)

(FRANK puts on a beard in front of audience)

ACT I

Scene 5

FRANK has disappeared in the last scene and now enters wearing a tank top, bell-bottom blue-jeans, boots, and with long hair and a full beard and jewelry.

There is rage beneath his control. HE seems anxious, angry and almost manic in getting everything done fast. HE is supervising, and working himself, to build what will become an elegant large living room out of an empty state.

The year is 1968. Four years earlier than the previous scene.

FRANK is throwing pillows.

FRANK

(FRANK goes to the phone hurriedly and dials and as HE waits HE hangs drapes, pictures, etc.)

Would you please check whether she's picked up her messages.

(Suddenly the doorbell rings and FRANK, obviously 'on hold' crosses and opens the door. It is MARY, all out of breath. SHE is younger, prettier, and openly adoring of FRANK, who seems hardly able to contain his anger at her throughout)

MARY

(So impressed with the apartment)

Oh, Frank, it's --

FRANK

(Holding up his hand, back into phone)

Well, I'm only asking. No, I do not want to leave my name.

(FRANK hangs up. To MARY)

Long time no see. I can't talk.

(Goes to work moving furniture on their marks)

MARY

He's not here yet, is he?

FRANK
(Still working)
Not yet.

MARY
(Taking off coat, putting down bag, etc.)
I could not get a cab so I ran. God. All this place needs is a humungous sign over the door blinking 'rich, rich, rich.'

FRANK
(Still moving furniture on its marks)
Good. I just wish I had two best sellers so I could be as rich as you.

MARY
It puts my psychiartrist's kids through college. Frank, I always forget to ask. How's your son?

FRANK
I don't see him anymore. Not since the adoption. It's too tough.

MARY
(Taking a bunch of pillows together)
Oh. Here, let me help. Now Frank, when Charley gets here do not do a 'guess who's reviewing movies now instead of writing these days' or he will be on my case all night.

FRANK
What?

MARY
Is something up? Are you mad at me?

FRANK
(Suddenly, for the first time, right at her -- openly angry)
Okay. Where were you all year, Mary? You and Charley who were going to stay right by my side. Where were you?

MARY
Oh. Letting you alone. So you could get her out of your system.

FRANK
Gussie. At least she came around. That's more than you two did.

MARY
All we were doing, Frank, was giving you room. Meanwhile --
(Shows him her hand)
I think I'm engaged.

FRANK
(Startled, covering displeasure)
That's great.

MARY
(Meaning more)
Is it?

FRANK
You going to marry him?

MARY
You got a better idea?

(FRANK is about to answer when doorbell rings)

FRANK
(To MARY)
I hope to God it's Charley.
(Opens door. CHARLEY stands there. long hair, blue jeans, a work shirt, boots, the uniform of the period. FRANK hugs him)
It's Charley. Hey, I'm so proud.

MARY
(Hugging him too)
Hey, I'm so proud too.

CHARLEY
(Looking around over them)
Far our. Is this where he lives? Or where the kids in the neighborhood go to school?

FRANK
I'm really proud of you, man. Those articles you wrote from jail just shook this country.
(Placing his hand on CHARLEY's shoulder)
Was it terrible?

CHARLEY
It was beautiful.

FRANK
Oh.

CHARLEY
See they put all of us that tore that draft board apart together there. And I got such a sense of purpose in jail. Of what life is about and what we're all doing here.

MARY
How do I get in?

FRANK
(Interrrupting)
Hold off on all that, Charley, please. Like I wrote you I invited some people over to hear you today. It's my first time out too. Since that whole ugly court thing. See, today's an important day for both of us.
(Changes tone again, including MARY)
And for Mary. Mary tells me she's getting married.

CHARLEY
(Also covering disappointment)
Mary? You found yourself a flower child.

MARY
Please. When I went looking for the flower children, all I found were the weeds.

Listen, I'm twenty-nine.

FRANK
Is that not fantastic news, Charley?
(FRANK goes off into the next room, Offstage, and enters with a zippered bag containing his tuxedo and accessories)

CHARLEY
No, I knew Mary was twenty-nine.
(To MARY, taking both her hands)
It's fantastic news.
(Slight pause, as HE looks at her)
Or is it? It's a shame Frank's so dumb, Mary, or he'd grab you.

FRANK
(Unzipping the bag and taking out the tux and all)
I love you think Mary's so dumb that she'd have me. I promise you both I will never get married again.
(Suddenly clinks his glass against CHARLEY's and sings)
HERE'S TO US.
(Clinks MARY's glass; MARY, trying not to register any thoughts on what has just been said, forces a smile)

WHO'S LIKE US?
(HE gestures for their response: clearly, this is a toast THEY have often made before; it is a beat before the OTHERS respond)

CHARLEY & MARY
DAMN FEW.
(THEY drink)

FRANK
(Nodding toward CHARLEY)
HEY, OLD FRIEND
ARE YOU OKAY, OLD FRIEND?
WHAT DO YOU SAY, OLD FRIEND,
ARE WE OR ARE WE UNIQUE?

FRANK (Continued)
TIME GOES BY,
EVERYTHING ELSE KEEPS CHANGING.
YOU AND I,
WE GET CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.

MOST FRIENDS FADE
OR THEY DON'T MAKE THE GRADE,
NEW ONES ARE QUICKLY MADE
AND, IN A PINCH, PAL, THEY'LL DO.
BUT US, OLD FRIEND --
WHAT'S TO DISCUSS, OLD FRIEND?
(Making another toast)
HERE'S TO US -- WHO'S LIKE US?
DAMN FEW!

(THEY drink)

CHARLEY
(Relaxing, arms around the OTHERS)
SO, OLD FRIENDS,
FILL ME IN SLOW, OLD FRIENDS --
START FROM HELLO, OLD FRIENDS,
I WANT THE WHEN, WHERE AND HOW.
OLD FRIENDS DO
TEND TO BECOME OLD HABIT --
NEVER KNEW
HOW MUCH I MISSED YOU TILL NOW.

ALL THREE
MOST FRIENDS FADE
OR THEY DON'T MAKE THE GRADE,
NEW ONES ARE QUICKLY MADE,
SOME OF THEM WORTH SOMETHING, TOO.
BUT US, OLD FRIENDS --
WHAT'S TO DISCUSS, OLD FRIENDS?

FRANK
GOOD FRIENDS GIVE YOU THEIR NIGHTS,
WHEREAS OLD FRIENDS GIVE YOU THEIR SHIRTS.

MARY
OLD FRIENDS NEVER PICK FIGHTS
BECAUSE OLD FRIENDS KNOW WHERE IT HURTS.

ALL
AND OLD FRIENDS STILL HAVE CHARITY
TOWARDS THE DREAMS YOU'VE DREAMT.
WITH OLD FRIENDS FAMILIARITY --

FRANK
DOESN'T --

CHARLEY
SHOULDN'T --

MARY
HAS TO --

FRANK
NEVER -- !

MARY
(Incredulously, to FRANK)
BEG YOUR PARDON, NEVER -- ?

CHARLEY
(Making peace)
SELDOM --

FRANK
(To MARY, thin-lipped)
HARDLY --

MARY
HARDLY -- ?!

CHARLEY
CLEARLY
BREEDS CONTEMPT.

ALL
OLD FRIENDS --

FRANK
DON'T LEAVE THEIR BRANDS ON YOU.

MARY
Mmm ...

ALL
OLD FRIENDS --

CHARLEY
NEVER COMPETE.

FRANK & MARY
(Exchanging looks)
Well ...

ALL
OLD FRIENDS --

MARY
DON'T MAKE DEMANDS ON YOU --

CHARLEY
MAKE LOTS OF DEMANDS ON YOU --

FRANK
NO, DON'T MAKE DEMANDS YOU CAN'T
MEET,
RIGHT?

CHARLEY
WRONG,
OUGHT TO MAKE DEMANDS YOU CAN'T MEET --

MARY
RIGHT!

FRANK
WRONG,
OUGHT TO KNOW THE TIME TO
MAKE DEMANDS YOU CAN'T MEET --

CHARLEY
RIGHT.

MARY
WRONG!

CHARLEY
(To FRANK)
Why don't you just compose instead of trying to take over the world?

MARY
(Interrupting him)
Why don't you get off his back and go write yourself, Mr. Do-what-I-say-not-what-I-do?

FRANK
(Interrupting her)
It's you two who are stuck. I'm doing great.

ALL
HEY, OLD FRIENDS,
HOW DO WE STAY OLD FRIENDS?
WHO IS TO SAY, OLD FRIENDS,
HOW AN OLD FRIENDSHIP SURVIVES?
(Facing front)
ONE DAY CHUMS
HAVING A LAUGH A MINUTE,
ONE DAY COMES
AND THEY'RE A PART OF YOUR LIVES.

NEW FRIENDS POUR
THROUGH THE REVOLVING DOOR --
MAYBE THERE'S ONE THAT'S MORE,
IF YOU FIND ONE, THAT'LL DO.
BUT TWO OLD FRIENDS,
'SPECIALLY YOU, OLD FRIENDS -- !

FRANK
(Raising his glass)
HERE'S TO US!

CHARLEY
(Raising his)
WHO'S LIKE US?

MARY
(Raising hers, but impishly not finishing the toast)
TWO OLD FRIENDS,
FEWER WON'T DO, OLD FRIENDS --

ALL
GOTTA HAVE TWO OLD FRIENDS
HELPING YOU BALANCE ALONG:

ONE UPBRAIDS YOU
FOR YOUR FAULTS AND FANCIES,
ONE PERSUADES YOU
THAT THE OTHER ONE'S WRONG.

MOST FRIENDS FADE
OR THEY DON'T MAKE THE GRADE,
NEW ONES ARE QUICKLY MADE,
PERFECT AS LONG AS THEY'RE NEW.
BUT US, OLD FRIENDS,
WHAT'S TO DISCUSS, OLD FRIENDS?
HERE'S TO US!
WHO'S LIKE US?
(In elaborate harmony, obviously practiced over the years)
DAMN FEW!
(THEY drink)

CHARLEY
How's the work going, buddy?
(To MARY)
Did you hear any of his new music?

(MARY shakes her head "no."
To FRANK again)
How's it going?

FRANK
(Getting into tuxedo, shirt, shoes, etc. while THEY talk)
Wow, I thought that now that he took on the war he'd leave me alone. A lot's happened, Charley. Mary, would you turn around while I do this?

(MARY turns, looking front while FRANK talks to CHARLEY behind her. Meanwhile, all the WORKMEN have finished and are disappearing one by one until, during the following exchange, only the THREE OF THEM will be Onstage)

Anyway, a lot's happened, Charley, in the weeks you've been gone. My father died a few days ago.

(CHARLEY starts to speak)

FRANK (Continued)
It's okay. You don't have to say anything. I'm just not ending up alone and with nothing like him. But just yesterday I got an offer I couldn't refuse. I accepted the head, well it's the ownership really, of a recording company. And That's bucks. So I've got that now in addition to the publishing company.

CHARLEY
(Stopped. Shocked)
Frank? What about all our plans? Like for the movie?

FRANK
Fine. Let's do it, Charley. Where is it? We have planned it and talked it and outlined it and for two years I have sat here waiting for it. Where is it?

CHARLEY

I'm really sorry, Frank, that I felt it important to go out there and help out, in my way, a very screwed up world.

MARY
Oh hail Charley, full of grace.

FRANK
I'm not going to let you do that to me, Charley.
(In a fury FRANK walks around the room pulling the covers off of all the furniture and throwing it Offstage as HE talks)
You're not going to make me the bad guy to your good guy anymore.
I have invited the richest, most influential people in this town here tonight. Each one coming with a check for a thousand dollars for the Peace movement. And to balance them, I have invited some Black Panthers, some Yippies, some people from the SDS. All to hear you. And all the press so you'll really be heard. And now, Charley, I'm certain that you'll even be suspicious of me doing this.

(Doorbell rings)

MARY
Frank? Do you want me to get that?

FRANK
One second. One second, Mary. You can leave by the back door, Charley. There's a servant's elevator there. Or stay. Whatever you decide. I hope you stay.

[Note: During the previous scene the CAST, arranged around their lockers, have changed clothes]

(BABBLE MUSIC begins. FRANK goes to the door and in comes TED, TERRY, KATE, ALEX, the ENTIRE CAST in the essence of clothes from the sixties: head-bands, beads, milk-maid dresses, mini-skirts, tank tops, fringe jackets, etc. JEROME, however, is in a dinner jacket. MARY stays Upstage, alone, watching, as the PEOPLE move Downstage and gather around a suddenly very happy FRANK who is now introducing them all to CHARLEY.

During this FRANK goes to the phone and dials. Suddenly HE turns and standing alone Upstage in the doorway is GUSSIE staring at him. HE puts down the phone and hurries to her over the noise and takes her hands and THEY are about to kiss but quickly break when JOE JOSEPHSON enters the same doorway and begins brushing off his jacket indicating HE saw nothing. FRANK shakes hands with JOE then pulls GUSSIE Down to the PEOPLE area for her to talk to CHARLEY.

JOE stands a moment, filling a pipe. HE sees MARY watching and moves over to her)

MARY
Gussie sure has style, Joe. I hear now she's starting a modeling agency. Did you know when you married her she was such an enterprising woman?

(SHE smiles. JOE doesn't smile back but again starts filling pipe)

JOE
Mary, how many people here know?

MARY
(A moment. Shrugs)
Those that you see and those that are coming.

JOE
(Nods. Understanding)
I decided not to know, even with everything. As long as she doesn't leave me, I can live with it.

MARY

Can you? Because I ...
(Continues to speak, but a WAITER comes by with champagne)

Thanks. I don't drink.

(WAITER starts to leave)

Wait a minute.

(WAITER turns and MARY takes a glass and downs it)

I just started.
(MARY takes another glass)

INTERMEDIATE

During this transitional scene GWEN WILSON will be speaking against some form of a "MERRILY" reprise, during which the CAST will change hair, make-up, and clothes. Meanwhile the set for FRANK's apartment will be struck and the Courthouse exterior set will be assembled.

As THEY complete their change the CAST will have drifted to various places Onstage throughout and as GWEN WILSON does the news on FRANK's divorce we will automatically be into the next scene.

GWEN
(Holding papers in her hand as though doing on-the-spot reporting)
Our government announced that already in this year 1968 we have lost more than ten thousand planes over Viet Nam. President Johnson announced he will not run for re-election this year and former Vice President Richard Nixon announced he would.

ALEX
I'm announcing I made more money this year decorating apartments than my father made in his entire life.

KATE
I married him because he's ... well, bigger than life.

ALEX
And I may be a character but I love Mom, God and apple pie.

KATE
He means that.

ALEX
And all my life I've been a Democrat, but this year I'm voting Republican.

KATE
He's getting older.

GWEN
1967: America has riots, Greece has a right-wing coup. The Arabs and Israelis have a six-day war.

MARY
I have a hit book. And it's not what I hoped. It's awful.

MARY (Continued)
It's as though nobody understood I really can't write.

GWEN
Dr. Spock is arrested, Muhammed Ali is stripped of his title, and Che Guevara is killed by Bolivian troops at age thirty-nine.

JEROME
I turn thirty this year. I have a bachelor's degree from Northwestern. A law degree from Harvard. A wife. A -- well, almost two children. My practice
(Smiles)
I want to say "makes perfect." We try to keep our lives very simple and very private. Oh listen, I think the terrible difference between now and the past is we've all lost our privacy.

GWEN
1966. I'm on the steps of the Courthouse in lower Manhattan where one of the hottest divorces in years is about to explode. Tune in at six.
(SHE turns to CAMERAMAN)
We can use that for the teaser, right?

CAMERAMAN
Right. You sure you want to stay down here?

[This dialogue segues right into next scene]

ACT I

Scene 6

The exterior setting here is an abstract with the upper level suggesting the Courthouse and the lower level becomes an area at the bottom of the steps where GWEN WILSON has set up her CAMERA-CREW's positions near the JUSTICE statue (which, incidentally, will be a performer from the CAST).

The year is 1966. Two years earlier than the previous scene.

GWEN

(To CAMERAMAN)

Much better angle from down here. A little perspective. And we're away from that zoo.

(To SOUNDMAN, putting a microphone over the JUSTICE's arm)

Secure that mike up there in case I get any one position interviews I don't have to hold this.

(As SHE taps the dangling mike from the JUSTICE's arm. Before HE answers THEY are suddenly interrupted as there is a loud commotion and screams from the platform above and GUSSIE is seen entering from the double doors above. GUSSIE hurries to get through the mad CROWD as flashbulbs go off and TV cameras go on [with their sudden red lights on top] and the TWO TV REPORTERS above on the platform get right beside her and stay with her as SHE zig-zags her way to the steps)

REPORTER ONE

Miss Carnegie, how are you involved in this scandal?

GUSSIE

(Fighting her way through the CROWD)

I'm not involved and it's not a scandal. Please let me through. I have no comment.

REPORTER TWO

Can you tell us anything about the taped phone calls?

GUSSIE

(Struggling to get to the stairs)

I have no comment. I can't tell you anything. I don't know anything.

(GUSSIE starts down the stairs where GWEN has now come half way up them with her hand-mike and gets right next to GUSSIE in the CROWD, following her down the stairs, right at her side. The OTHER REPORTERS, FANS and OGLERS surround GUSSIE and cause her to zig-zag her way down the steps)

GWEN

Are you surprised at in this divorce?

GUSSIE

(Down the stairs, GWEN right beside her with mike)

I have no comment. Except to say nothing surprises me. Everyone in the western hemisphere knows Mr. Shepard is our closest friend and we would laugh at all this if it wasn't so sick.

GWEN

What about the tape Mrs. Shepard claims to have?

GUSSIE

I have no comment.

(Trying to exit. Looking in her purse for sunglasses)

Except I hope Mrs. Shepard has some tape. And puts it right across her sick mouth.

(Suddenly there is screaming and jumping and flashbulbs going off in the hysterical GROUP still on the upper platform as BETH and her ATTORNEY and MOTHER enter from the double doors. ALL the REPORTERS except GWEN leave GUSSIE and rush up the stairs to get their pictures yelling "It's the wife," "Here comes Mrs. Shepard," "Get out of my way." Unable to bear it BETH bursts into tears and runs back through the double doors into the Courthouse with her ATTORNEY and MOTHER following her. While all this is going on GUSSIE says to GWEN:)

(And SHE hastily exits looking for a taxi)

GWEN

(To her CAMERAMAN, who has filmed all this, as SHE hurries over in front of the JUSTICE statue and lays down her microphone, using the overhead mike)

Okay, we'll use that and whatever else I get later as

GWEN (Continued)
'cut-tos.' Right now let's film the intro. Ready? Get the statue in behind me. Let's go.

(Red light goes on on top of camera and a sudden and contrasting big smile)

Good evening. This is Gwen Wilson outside of the New York County Courthouse. Franklin Shepard, the boy-wonder composer, is being sued here in what is turning out to be one of the juiciest divorces in years. What surprised everyone, especially Shepard, was Beth Shepard's startling testimony when she produced a tape of allegedly very private recorded phone conversations between Shepard and Miss X. Now who and what is on that tape is anybody's lurid guess but the news media has been quick to label Shepard 'phone freak Frank'.

(GWEN drops her TV manner and walks to CAMERAMAN becoming again the aggressive businesswoman)

Okay, cut. We'll use the Gussie Carnegie stuff right after I say 'phone freak'. We'll pick it up when I interview them coming out so stick close by. Nobody wander off.

(GWEN grabs her hand-held mike and hurries up to the upper level platform as entering from the double doors are JEROME, CHARLEY, MARY and the producer JOE JOSEPHSON. Many flashbulbs and REPORTERS asking "What's happening inside," "Any statement for the press," "What's on the tape," "What's with the closed court")

JEROME
I have no statement, fellows. As you know the Judge has closed the courtroom and put a gag order on us so what can I say? I have no statement.

REPORTER #1
Who's the woman on the tape?

JEROME
I have no statement, okay.

(THEY start to walk down the steps. To MARY, CHARLEY and JOE)

Stay with me.

REPORTER #2
When's the phone freak coming out?

JEROME
(Turning to him)
I want you to know you're liable. You're liable when you start that kind of thing.

REPORTER #2
When's Mr. Shepard coming out.

JEROME
I believe he has just left by another exit.

REPORTER #1
I know that other exit. Come on. Come on.

(The TWO REPORTERS and their CREWS and MOST of the BYSTANDERS hurry around the back of the platform and disappear. SOME STRAGGLERS remain in the distance, dotted around)

MARY
I get so confused when I'm around legal people. Are you lying to them or lying to us?

JEROME
Keep talking like we've just stopped to light a cigarette. I told Frank to wait inside until the crowd thins out. Light a cigarette somebody.

(MARY and JOE take out cigarettes)

JOE
(To JEROME, looking around)
I'm only worried some people might think it's Gussie on those tapes. You know people!

(MARY gives CHARLEY a look)

CHARLEY
(Lighting MARY's, then JOE's cigarettes)
What's happening, Jerome? What in hell's happening? Why did we all get booted out on our cans?

JEROME
Her attorney allegedly got the court closed one, for the sake

JEROME (Continued)
of the child, and two, because of the inflamatory evidence about to be introduced.

MARY
But what about Frank?

JEROME
When she asked for all that I warned Frank. I warned Frank 'settle for whatever but settle.' Abandonment of a wife and children, come on.

MARY
Jerome, she threw him out. And she struck him, he never touched her.

JEROME
How's he going to prove it? And now she's come up with some damned tapes. And she's implied drugs. And she's implied infidelity. And she's implied --

JOE
(To the REST. Interrupting)
And meanwhile Gussie is falling apart. Did you see her?

CHARLEY
Exactly what should he do, Jerome?

JEROME
Exactly he should give her everything now.
He thought she wanted too much well now she wants it all. And if he doesn't give it to her the court will.

CHARLEY
Man. And they talk about justice.

JEROME
You want to talk about justice or you want to talk about a wife's rights in New York City in 1966?

(On the upper level platform, FRANK appears, looking almost stunned. The ONE or TWO remaining REPORTERS shoot flashbulbs at him questioning him "How much is she asking, Mr. Shepard," "Have you heard the phone freak tape," "Why'd she want the court closed," "You still love her?")

JEROME
(Having hurried up the stairs, leads FRANK down, talking over the PRESS PEOPLE)
Can't talk about the case, everyone. It's unfortunate because we'd love to but you heard the ruling. Let us through guys. Please. Give us a break, fellas.

(When THEY arrive almost at the bottom, and JEROME's head is turned away talking to a REPORTER, another REPORTER rushes over with earphones and a telephone in his hand to the other side of FRANK)

REPORTER #2
(Quietly, very serious, harried, handing him the phone)
Mr. Shepard. It's an emergency they say.

FRANK
(Still stunned, upset, takes the phone and puts it to his ear)
Hello.

(Suddenly a flash goes off)

REPORTER #2
That's the baby we want.
(Grabs the phone and hurries Off-stage with his PHOTOGRAPHER)

REPORTER #1
(To his PHOTOGRAPHER)
Why didn't you get that, you nerd?
(Hits his shoulder and HE and MOST of the OTHERS exit)

JEROME
Frank, watch it, damn it. Now watch it. They're laying for you.

FRANK
Why? What did I do? What did I do wrong?

GWEN
(Who has remained with her CREW, as FRANK follows JEROME's look to GWEN)
No questions. Nothing. Go over there.
(Indicating JUSTICE statue)
I'll watch for you. Go on. You look like you need a break.

(FRANK, JEROME, MARY, CHARLEY and JOE all walk over in front of the JUSTICE statue where the OTHERS

are waiting. GWEN and her CREW stand at the side, removed)

CHARLEY
(Talking hurriedly. Hushed, so the TV PEOPLE can't hear)
Frank, we all think you ought to get out any way you can.

MARY
(Hushed. Urgent)
It's not worth it, Frank.

FRANK
It's everything I got.

MARY
(Quietly. Smiling. Trying to excite him)
We'll find you a little place to live, Frank, and you can get back to your music.

CHARLEY
(Hushed. Urgent)
Mary's got a best seller, Frank, and our show is running and I'm teaching so I got bread for us. We can get you going again. Evelyn, Mary and me'll be right there.

FRANK
I shouldn't be punished is all.

MARY
(Hushed. Urgent. Upset)
Please, Frank. Drop this.

CHARLEY
(Hushed. Pleading)
I beg you, Frank. You can't win.

(Just then BETH, her LAWYER, and MOTHER enter on the upper platform through the double doors and start down the stairs, hurrying and looking around for REPORTERS ... all of whom are gone except GWEN and CREW who do nothing ... and THEY begin down the stairs to the opposite side of the stage)

FRANK
I can't have nothing. I can't be no one with nothing.
(Sees BETH and suddenly shouts after her)
BETH!

(HER PARTY almost stops their exit for a brief moment, but still with their backs to FRANK, THEY continue on Offstage Right, but before THEY exit FRANK screams again)
BETH!!!

(THEY exit)

JEROME

You got your music, Frank. And that little publishing company is yours.

FRANK
I can't give up. I'll have nothing. All that work for nothing. I want to write what I want or teach or --

CHARLEY
(Excited)
You know, Frank, maybe it's better - - -

(Suddenly BETH appears on Far Stage Right. THEY ALL stop. FRANK looks at her then to his FRIENDS who

slowly understand and move away to Far Stage Left. BETH walks to FRANK, who stands waiting in front of the JUSTICE statue. GWEN and her CREW stand alone Upstage Left in front of their camera, watching. We notice the red light on their camera lighting up)

FRANK

Beth.

BETH

Frank.

(Alone with him, in front of the JUSTICE statue)

I want you to give up, Frank.

FRANK

I'll never give up, Beth.

BETH

You're going to be surprised at those tapes.

FRANK

Is that what you came back to say?

BETH

I'm not out to hurt you, Frank. I just want to save me. And our boy. But I'll hurt you if I have to. I blame me, too, Frank. I could have stopped it. I knew the first night you met her. I could have stopped it.

FRANK

Do you still love me?

BETH

Are you guilty, Frank?

FRANK

Do you still love me?

BETH

(Pauses, sings, quietly at first)

NOT A DAY GOES BY,
NOT A SINGLE DAY
BUT YOU'RE SOMEWHERE A PART OF MY LIFE
AND IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'LL STAY.

AS THE DAYS GO BY,
I KEEP THINKING, WHEN DOES IT END?
WHERE'S THE DAY I'LL HAVE STARTED FORGETTING?
(With increasing fury)
BUT I JUST GO ON

BETH (Continued)

THINKING AND SWEATING
AND CURSING AND CRYING
AND TURNING AND REACHING
AND WAKING AND DYING
AND NO,
NOT A DAY GOES BY,
NOT A BLESSED DAY
BUT YOU'RE STILL SOMEHOW PART OF MY LIFE
AND YOU WON'T GO AWAY.

AND THERE'S HELL TO PAY,
AND UNTIL I DIE
I'LL DIE DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER --
TILL THE DAYS GO BY
TILL THE DAYS GO BY
TILL THE DAYS GO BY.

(Quietly again)

Are you guilty, Frank?

FRANK

You know I never did any of those things. I never did drugs. I never hit you. I never loved Gussie.

BETH

Did you want that kind of life so much you went with her? Did you go with her?

FRANK

I never loved her, Beth.

BETH

But are you guilty, Frank?

FRANK

(After a moment, quietly, HE looks down)

Yes, I'm guilty.

(No answer. HE looks up to see BETH is neither looking at nor listening to him, but staring at something over their heads. HE and the OTHERS turn and see the microphone. Horrified, HE turns back to BETH, but SHE runs offstage crying. Her LAWYER and MOTHER who have been standing Far Right follow her Off. JEROME turns to GWEN. HE is furious)

GWEN

(Lying, not going to be cornered, shrugs)

I guess the microphone was on. How could I have known?

FRANK
(Watching after BETH, stands there screaming, the loudspeaker bellowing it out)
Beth! Beth!! Beth!!!

(For a moment, HE just stands. MUSIC. During the following, his FRIENDS begin drifting Onstage, hearing the bellowing, SOME to help comfort him, some just to see what's going on, until at the end of the scene the stage is crowded with PEOPLE)

JEROME
You're going to be okay. It's all going to be okay.

LES
You're gonna look back on this and laugh.

JOE
Up to now your life's just been a rehearsal. You'll see.

TED
I wish to hell my wife would divorce me.

KATE
You know what, darling? You're already healing.
(FRANK still just stands, not responding)

JOE
SO WE'LL DO A NEW SHOW,
SO YOU'LL MEET A NEW DAME,
SO YOU'LL TAKE SOME TIME FOR PERSONAL PLEASURE.

CHARLEY
THERE GOTTA BE ENDINGS
OR THERE WOULDN'T BE BEGINNINGS --
(No response)
RIGHT?

LES
YOU GOT TALENT TO BLOW
AND YOU'RE MAKING A NAME
AND THAT SONG YOU WROTE'S A NATIONAL TREASURE.

TED
YOU'RE LOOKING AT LOSSES
WHEN YOU SHOULD BE COUNTING WINNINGS --

JOE, LES, CHARLEY
RIGHT!

JEROME
BEST THING THAT EVER COULD HAVE HAPPENED --

FRANK
(Pleasantly, dead)
Right.

ALEX
SO YOU'LL GET A NEW FLAT
AND YOU'LL HAVE A FEW FLINGS,
START A WHOLE NEW LIFE AND LEARN TO ADORE IT --

KATE
IF YOU WANT TO HAVE WEDDINGS,
THEN YOU HAVE TO HAVE DIVORCES --
(FRANK shoots her a look)
NO?

TERRY
THOUGH IT'S SAD AND ALL THAT,
YOU GET OVER THESE THINGS,
AND YOU COME OUT SOMEHOW BETTER FOR IT --

KATE
JUST BECAUSE YOU CHANGE HORSES
DOESN'T MEAN YOU'RE CHANGING COURSES --

ALL (Except MARY)
RIGHT!!

JEROME
BEST THING THAT EVER COULD HAVE HAPPENED,
I SAY BEST THING THAT EVER COULD HAVE HAPPENED -- !

TERRY
(Overlapping)
BEST THING THAT EVER COULD HAVE HAPPENED --!

ALEX
(Overlapping)
ONE MORE THING NOT TO THINK ABOUT --

TED
(Overlapping)
IT WAS ALL GETTING MUCH TOO COMPLICATED --

FRANK
(Interrupting, edgily)
Right!
(An embarrassed pause -- no one knows quite what to do or say. Then MARY steps forward)

MARY
ALL RIGHT, NOW YOU KNOW:
LIFE IS CRUMMY.
WELL NOW YOU KNOW.

I MEAN, BIG SURPRISE:
PEOPLE LOVE YOU AND TELL YOU LIES.
BRICKS CAN FALL OUT OF CLEAR BLUE SKIES.
PUT YOUR DIMPLE DOWN,
NOW YOU KNOW.

OKAY, THERE YOU GO --
LEARN TO LIVE WITH IT,
NOW YOU KNOW.

IT'S CALLED FLOWERS WILT,
IT'S CALLED APPLES ROT,
IT'S CALLED THIEVES GET RICH AND SAINTS GET SHOT,
IT'S CALLED GOD DON'T ANSWER PRAYERS A LOT,
OKAY, NOW YOU KNOW.

OKAY, NOW YOU KNOW,
NOW FORGET IT.
DON'T FALL APART AT THE SEAMS.
IT'S CALLED LETTING GO YOUR ILLUSIONS,
NOT GIVING UP ON YOUR DREAMS.
YESSIR, QUITE A BLOW --
DON'T REGRET IT,
AND DON'T LET'S GO TO EXTREMES.

IT'S CALLED, WHAT'S YOUR CHOICE?
IT'S CALLED COUNT TO TEN.
IT'S CALLED BURN YOUR BRIDGES, START AGAIN.
YOU SHOULD BURN THEM EVERY NOW AND THEN
OR YOU'LL NEVER GROW!

BECAUSE NOW YOU GROW.
LIFE IS KILLING YOU,
NOW YOU GROW.

YOU'RE RIGHT, NOTHING'S FAIR,
RIGHT, IT'S ALL A PLOT,
RIGHT, TOMORROW DOESN'T LOOK TOO HOT --
(FRANK looks away, still in pain)
RIGHT, YOU BETTER LOOK AT WHAT YOU'VE GOT:
(Pause, as HE doesn't respond)
OVER HERE, HELLO?
(FRANK looks at her, smiles for the first time)
OKAY, NOW YOU KNOW.
RIGHT?

TERRY
IT'S A MONTH AT THE MOST --

LES
SURE, YOU'LL SPIN A FEW WHEELS --

ALEX
BUT YOU DON'T LOOK BACK --

KATE
JUST LEAVE ALL THE PIECES.

GROUP I
WHEN YOU HAVEN'T GOT ONE CHOICE,
MIGHT AS WELL ENJOY THE OTHER.

GROUP II
RIGHT!

TERRY
YOU'LL COME OUT TO THE COAST --

JEROME
WE CAN SET A FEW DEALS,
AND I'M TALKING STRICTLY MAJOR RELEASES.

GROUP II
AN EXIT FROM ONE PLACE
IS AN ENTRANCE TO ANOTHER.

GROUP I
RIGHT!

ALL
BEST THING THAT EVER COULD HAVE --

MARY
I MEAN, SOCKS HAVE HOLES,
I MEAN, ROADS HAVE BUMPS,
THEY MAKE MEATHEADS CHAMPS AND NICE GUYS CHUMPS --

ALL
-- HAPPENED!

MARY
I MEAN, EVEN CREAM OF WHEAT HAS LUMPS --

ALL
(Variously, overlapping)
BEST THING THAT EVER COULD HAVE HAPPENED!...
IT WAS ALL GETTING MUCH TOO COMPLICATED ANYHOW...
BEST THING THAT EVER COULD HAVE HAPPENED!

FRANK
(Cheerful, determined, to JOE)
RIGHT, WE'LL DO A NEW SHOW --
(To CHARLEY)
NO, WE'LL DO A WHOLE BATCH! --
(To MARY)
AND IT'S OVER WITH, I'VE CUT THE CONNECTION --
(To EVERYONE)
GOTTA HAVE ENDINGS,
OR THERE WOULDN'T BE BEGINNINGS.

ALL
RIGHT!

FRANK
WHEN YOU'RE FLATTENED THIS LOW
AND YOU'RE STARTING FROM SCRATCH,
YOU CAN ONLY GO IN ONE DIRECTION!

ALL
THE SIDE IS RETIRED,
BUT THERE STILL ARE LOTS OF INNINGS,
RIGHT?
(Variously, overlapping)
BEST THING THAT EVER COULD HAVE HAPPENED!...
YOU'RE STARTING OVER!...

(And into FINAL CHORUS of "NOW YOU KNOW")

END OF ACT ONE

ACT II

Scene 1

Outside the Alvin Theatre on a rainy night. Far Downstage Right is a stage door and a couple of garbage cans. Above is a lighted marquee that reads Joseph Josephson in association with Gussie Carnegie presents TERRY TURNER in MUSICAL HUSBANDS.

Roping off the entrance to the theatre, kleig lights, and the sound of much chattering. At Far Left is the curb onto the street. The audience inside the theatre is visible, seated on the bleachers (which serve as the theatre seats).

From the curb Downstage Left JOE JOSEPHSON enters and runs across stage holding an open umbrella and HE opens the stage door and holds an umbrella over FRANK and CHARLEY who enter wearing tuxedos. THEY carry a WOMAN wrapped in a blanket and run across stage with JOE running with them, holding the open umbrella over them, to the curb Far Downstage Left. MARY and BETH hurry behind them, with open umbrellas of their own, but stop at the curb with JOE when the OTHERS disappear off the curb (and with JOE's umbrella). JOE hurries to stand under BETH's umbrella. The THREE stand calling Offstage.

The year is 1964, Two years earlier than the previous scene.

JOE

(Calling)
All right. Hurry! The cab is all ready. Take you right to the hospital. Right to the door.

BETH

(Calling)
Are you guys sure we shouldn't come?

MARY

(Calling)
Lift her gently, you two.

MARY (Continued)
(To BETH and LES, reaching nervously for humor)
I'd hate it if she'd have the baby right here and they'd feel obligated to call it Alvin.

BETH
(Calling)
Are you sure we shouldn't come?

JOE
(To BETH)
They're sure, they're sure. All of you getting out of that cab would look like a circus act.

BETH
(Calling)
Breathe deep, Evelyn. Just keep taking deep breaths.

FRANK
(Hurrying in from curb Downstage Left and getting under BETH's umbrella)
She's fine. The pains aren't all that close yet.

MARY
She said it's the thing she feared most. Ruining the opening night.

JOE
I couldn't imagine what happened. All of you running up the aisle like that looked like the eleven o'clock number offended you.

BETH
Frank? Honey, shouldn't we get another cab and meet them there?

CHARLEY
(Entering from curb Downstage Left, under his umbrella. Amazed, almost hurt)
She wouldn't let me come.

BETH
What are you talking about, Charley?

CHARLEY
She said 'I'm not ruining this for you, Charley,' and she kicked me out.

BETH
Let's get another cab.

CHARLEY
I can't. I promised her I'd record the applause so she could hear it. Look what she brought.
(Holds a small tape-recorder)

MARY
Shouldn't we get a cab ready, Charley?

JOE
I'll do it. That's what producers actually do. Flunky things. Degrading things. Things nobody else wants to do. And we never complain.
(HE exits off the curb Downstage Left holding his coat over his head)

FRANK
(Excited to move)
You want to go back in and see the end?

CHARLEY
No, I know how it ends.
(CHARLEY turns to the OTHERS and sticks his finger down his throat)

FRANK
(To the OTHERS)
Am I not fortunate I don't have to deal with excessive gratitude?

CHARLEY
(To FRANK. Dropping the 'act')
Oh, Frank, Frank, I'm honest to God not ungrateful. But I see a trap here. I mean -- don't you know what I mean? I mean we want to reach and to risk and to -- well, not this.

FRANK
All I know is I'm twenty-seven years old and I think I've got a hit. Mary, tell him. You got stories published, you got a book that's a hit.

MARY
All mistakes.

BETH
It's what we all wanted, Charley. After this I feel Frank can do anything.

CHARLEY
Why don't they sing faster?
(Looks at watch)
I can't wait. I gotta go. She could --

(Just as CHARLEY is about to go, suddenly HE is stopped by the sounds of applause and bravos inside the theater. We see the enthusiastic AUDIENCE rise and cheer. It is an ovation. FRANK, CHARLEY, MARY and BETH stand stock still, listening in wonder. Another ovation. We sense the theater doors opening and hear the ORCHESTRA behind playing the curtain-calls.

During the following song, as the ovations mount in intensity, CHARLEY pulls out the tape-recorder and puts it on top of the first garbage can nearest the theater. As the song continues, there is a sense of the CRITICS and theater AUDIENCE leaving, flash bulbs going off in the background, and PEOPLE rushing to their cars or cabs in the rain. FRANK sings:)

FRANK
LISTEN TO THAT!

(Ovation)

WILL YOU LISTEN TO THAT?

(Ovation)

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS?
LET ME TELL YOU WHAT IT MEANS --
WAIT, NO, ANYONE WHO EVEN THINKS IT,
DON'T SAY IT, YOU'LL JINX IT --

(Ovation)

CHARLEY
LISTEN TO THAT!

(Ovation)

JESUS, LISTEN TO THAT!

(Ovation)

FRANK
DOES THAT MAKE YOU FEEL PROUD?
WELL, FEEL MORE THAN JUST PROUD --
OKAY, WAIT,
I'LL TEMPT FATE
AND I'LL STATE
IT OUT LOUD:

THAT, UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS,
IS --

(Ovation)

I CAN'T STAND IT -- !
LISTEN -- !

(Ovation)

YES!
THAT'S THE SOUND OF A HIT!
IT'S A HIT!
GANG, I THINK THIS IS IT!
NO MORE WRITING CLEVER LITTLE SHOWS
FOR THOSE BASEMENT SALOONS,
NO MORE PROCLAMATIONS FROM THE PROS
THAT "YOU CAN'T HUM THE TUNES" --

CHARLEY
NO MORE SNEAKING IN AT INTERMISSION
TO THE PLAYS YOU WISH YOU COULD AFFORD --

FRANK
OR PRODUCERS HAVING YOU AUDITION
WHENEVER THEY'RE BORED --

CHARLEY
AND WHO'LL SAY
RIGHT AWAY
AS YOU PLAY
THE FIRST CHORD:

"I think, personally, to me it's very, very -- what is the word? -- interesting. And if it wasn't my investors' money, I'd do it in a minute -- "

(Another ovation drowns him out)

ALL
WE'RE A HIT!
WE'RE A HIT!

BETH
I'M SO GLAD, I COULD SPIT!

FRANK
NO MORE COACHING THOSE SOPRANOS
WITH VOICES LIKE BEES ...

CHARLEY
NO MORE SECONDHAND PIANOS
WITH SIX BROKEN KEYS ...

MARY
NO MORE AGENTS YELLING FOR THEIR MINIONS
WHILE THEY SIT AND GIVE YOU THEIR OPINIONS --

ALL
JUST FOR THESE
GUARANTEES
WE SHOULD PLEASE
THANK THE LORD
IT'S A HIT!
IT'S A HIT!

BETH
WILL MY FOLKS HAVE A FIT!
AFTER ALL OF THAT BALONEY
THEY MADE ME GO THROUGH,
ALL THAT "HONEY, NOT THAT HE'S A PHONY,
BUT WHAT DOES HE DO?",
WILL THEIR FACES BE STONY
WHEN THEY SEE ON THEIR SONY
SOMEONE HANDING THE PHONY
THE TONY
AWARD!

(MARY gives FRANK an object from the trash-can as a Tony while CHARLEY gives him another as a microphone)

FRANK
I would like to begin by thanking all the hundreds of people who have turned down everything else I have written so I could win this --

(Ovation)

Thank you.

ALL
IT'S A HIT!

CHARLEY
(Holding his hand up for attention)
HOLD IT.
GUYS, THERE'S STILL THE REVIEWS LEFT.
BOTH THE TRIB AND THE NEWS LEFT
EARLY,

CHARLEY (Continued)
SURLY --
NOT A GOOD SIGN.
EVEN IF THEY GIVE US A CHANCE, GUYS,
LET'S NOT FORGET THE ADVANCE, GUYS:
(Holds up fingers an inch apart)
NOT A
LOTTA
CASH, GUYS.
ALSO, EVEN IF IT'S A SMASH, GUYS,
DOESN'T THAT MEAN WE SELL OUT?
(Hastily)
NO, I HOPE WE SELL OUT,
WHAT I MEAN IS SELL OUT --
WELL, YOU KNOW --
SUCCESS IS LIKE A FAILURE,
IT'S HOW YOU PERCEIVE IT,
IT'S WHAT YOU DO WITH IT,
NOT HOW YOU ACHIEVE IT
(Hysterically)
AND I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S
A HIT!

(Ovation. CHARLEY screams along with them)

IT'S A HIT! IT'S A HIT!

ALL
IT'S A HIT! IT'S A HIT!

CHARLEY
WE'RE AHEAD, WE SHOULD QUIT.

FRANK
(Putting his arm around CHARLEY)
KID, WE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT
AND WE MADE IT, AMEN!

CHARLEY
(Putting his arm around FRANK)
IT'S THE FREEDOM TO WRITE
WHAT WE WANT -- NOW AND THEN.

BETH
(Popping in between them, putting her arms around BOTH)
NO, WHAT CALLS FOR CONFETTI,
ALTHOUGH IT SOUNDS PETTY,
IS NO MORE SPAGHETTI
AND TWINKIES AGAIN!

ALL
IT'S A HIT! IT'S A HIT!

FRANK
AND I HUMBLY SUBMIT
THAT AS SOON AS IT STARTS
TO TAKE OFF REALLY WELL,
IF THE SONGS HIT THE CHARTS
AND THE RECORDS'LL SELL,
WHAT WITH SONGS EARNING BULLETS
AND EVERY HOUSE FULL, IT'S
A CINCH FOR THE PULITZER --

MARY
(Drily)
OR THE NOBEL.

CHARLEY
AND IT'S
NICE TO KNOW THIS MUST BE THE WORST NIGHT
YET FOR ALL OF THAT FIRST NIGHT
CREW WHO
YOO-HOO,
"GOD, WHAT A BOMB!"

MARY
(Nodding)
ALL THOSE LOVELY FOLK YOU CAN TRUST TO
SCAN THE NEWSPAPERS JUST TO
HAIL YOUR
FAILURE --

BOTH
(Calling to the CROWD)
SORRY!

BETH
YES, AND
WHO STOOD BY YOU
THROUGH THICK, THIN
AND IN BETWEEN,
THE ROUGH AND THE SMOOTH,
THE FAT AND THE LEAN?
YES, WHO'S THE
TRULY
UNSUNG HERO
OR RATHER
THE HEROINE
WHO GREETED YOUR GROANS
WITH A CHEERFUL GRIN ...

WHO LIT THE FUSE?

THE TRIUMPH IS RIGHTFULLY
REALLY WHOSE?

MARY
YES,
WHO STOOD BY YOU
THROUGH THICK, THIN
AND IN BETWEEN,
THE ROUGH AND THE SMOOTH,
THE FAT AND THE LEAN, THE
UNSUNG -- EXCUSE THE EXPRESSION,
BUT UNSUNG
HEROINE ...

(Gesturing to indicate size)
WHO SAID YOU WERE BIGGER
THAN IRVING BERLIN ...

WHO STIRRED THE MUSE
BY READING YOU EVERYONE'S
BAD REVIEWS?
THE TRIUMPH IS RIGHTFULLY
REALLY WHOSE?

CHARLEY
(Worriedly, to FRANK)
HEY, DIDN'T I JUST HEAR A COUPLE OF BOOS?

(A huge ovation -- the largest yet; the FOUR stand stunned)

FRANK
LISTEN TO THAT!
WILL YOU LISTEN TO THAT!
TELL ME, IS THAT A NOISE
OR IS THAT A NOISE?
THAT IS A NOISE I'VE BEEN WAITING
THE WHOLE OF MY LIFE TO HEAR!
LISTEN TO THAT!
I CAN'T
STAND IT!

BETH
(To MARY)
LISTEN TO THAT!
DID YOU LISTEN TO THAT?
HONEY, IS THAT A NOISE
OR IS THAT A NOISE?
THAT IS THE LOVELIEST NOISE
FOR A BREADWINNING WIFE TO HEAR!

(The ovation continues)

MARY
LISTEN TO THAT! THAT'S OBSCENE!
THAT IS A NOISE THAT IS REALLY A --
LISTEN TO THAT! WILL YOU LISTEN TO THAT!
GOLLY, I CAN'T
STAND IT!

CHARLEY
(Simultaneously)
LISTEN TO THAT!
(To FRANK)
BUDDY, THAT IS A NOISE THAT IS REALLY A NOISE!
I CAN'T
STAND IT!
WILL YOU LISTEN TO THAT! LISTEN TO THAT!

BETH
(Simultaneously)
LISTEN TO THAT!
DID YOU LISTEN TO THAT!
I CAN'T
STAND IT!
DID YOU LISTEN TO THAT!
LISTEN TO THAT!

FRANK
(Simultaneously)
LISTEN TO THAT!
THAT IS THE NOISE I'VE BEEN
WAITING MY LIFE TO HEAR!
LISTEN TO THAT!
LISTEN TO THAT!

ALL
WILL YOU LISTEN TO THAT!
THAT'S NOT JUST AN OVATION, THAT'S JOY UNCONFINED,
IT'S THE SOUND OF AN AUDIENCE LOSING ITS MIND,
FOLKS, IT'S "FUNNY GIRL," "FIDDLER" AND "DOLLY"
COMBINED --

IT'S A HIT! IT'S A HIT!
IT'S A PALPABLE HIT!

FRANK & CHARLEY
IF IT ONLY EVEN RUNS A MINUTE,
AT LEAST IT'S A WEDGE,
IT'S THE THEATER AND WE'RE REALLY IN IT,
NOT JUST ON THE EDGE!

BETH & MARY
IF YOUR SPIRITS EVER NEED IMPROVING,
YOU CAN DROP IN ANY NIGHT FOR FREE!

FRANK
(Looking at CHARLEY)
BUT THE THING THAT'S POSITIVELY MOVING --

CHARLEY
(Looking at FRANK)
-- YOU COULD HAVE FOOLED ME --

FRANK & CHARLEY
(Putting their arms around each other's shoulder)
IS WE'RE STILL GOOD FRIENDS!
NOTHING CAN KILL GOOD FRIENDS!
WHERE THERE'S A WILL, GOOD FRIENDS
DON'T NEED SUCCESS TO SURVIVE.
(Drawing the OTHERS in)
AND US, GOOD FRIENDS,
WHAT'S TO DISCUSS, GOOD FRIENDS?

(Ovation)

ALL
WE'VE GOT A
SUREFIRE
GENUINE
WALKAWAY
BLOCKBUSTER
LINES DOWN TO BROADWAY
BOFFOLA
SENSATIONAL
BOX OFFICE
LALLAPALOOZA
HOME RUN --

ALEX

(To KATE)
You liked it?!

(Laughter)

ALL FOUR

(Softly)
IT'S A HIT.

(The rest of the scene is spoken over and in between the CROWDS in front screaming at the recognition of CELEBRITIES)

JOE

(Entering and hurrying under CHARLEY's umbrella, still with his coat over his head)
Come on, I got your cab. Hurry up, it's waiting.

(CHARLEY starts to exit and a very wet JOE hurries under MARY's umbrella)

MARY

I'm coming, too.

(JOE hurries under BETH and FRANK's umbrella)

BETH

We are, too.

(THEY start to go and JOE slaps his side wondering how to get out of this rain and exits Right into the stage door)

FRANK

(Stopping them)
Wait. What about the party? Shouldn't we at least stop in?

CHARLEY

I can't Frank. I'm having a baby.

MARY

(To BETH and FRANK)
You two go.

FRANK

Someone should go. Don't you think someone should go?

BETH

You go, honey.

MARY
Beth, I think you should --

BETH
(Interrupting)
You go, Frank. I'll stay with Evelyn.

FRANK
I just think somebody should be there.

CHARLEY
Stay Beth. We'll go.

BETH
No.
(SHE hurriedly kisses FRANK's cheek)
Don't hurry. Enjoy it.

FRANK
I just think one of us should be there.

BETH
I do too.
(Suddenly embraces him, trying not to show SHE's bothered)
I'm so proud.

CHARLEY
We'll wait for you at the hospital, Frank.
(CHARLEY hurries for the cab)

BETH
If you don't get there I'll meet you at home.

BETH
(Nods)

(A slight pause)
I love you, honey.
(Leaving FRANK's umbrella SHE hurries under MARY's umbrella. FRANK takes the two garbage can lids and puts them back on top of the cans, then trying to see what is going on with the CROWDS.

BETH is trying to move to the curb but MARY keeps stopping her)

MARY
(Stopping)
Beth, I think you should --

BETH
(Moving them toward the curb Left)
I know what I'm doing, Mary.

MARY
(Stopping them again)
I don't think you understand Gussie and how she works.

BETH
Sometimes you have to trust.

MARY
And sometimes you don't have to.

BETH
I just know I'm doing the proper thing.
(Exiting, pulling MARY with her.

FRANK is left alone watching through the bleachers. Suddenly his eye goes to the tape-recorder left on the ground. HE runs to get it, picks it up, and starts to run after CHARLEY when HE realizes CHARLEY and the OTHERS have gone off in the cab. Standing there FRANK shuts off the recorder and presses the rewind button and looks back again through the bleachers at the exiting CELEBRITIES. The tape is rewound. FRANK goes to pocket the machine. Stops. Slowly turning toward the audience and away from the bleachers HE turns it on again. The enormous sound from the recorder comes on of the applause and bravos. HE listens. FRANK, alone in his fantasy, slowly begins to bow)

ACT II

Scene 2

As we see the completed garden, with its greenhouse being its distinction, we view the GUESTS through the opened doors leading into the brownstone.

The number "THE BLOB" has gone into a reprise of "MERRILY" which goes into the scene.

MUSIC comes from inside the brownstone as a live BAND plays somewhere on the first floor. Beyond the PEOPLE standing crowded in front of the angled doorway we can see OTHER GUESTS dancing, suggesting a large and filled dancing area at the party inside.

WAITERS, wearing red jackets, black bow ties and dark trousers pass among the GUESTS in the upper windows, or come out onto the second floor terrace, and frequently pass in and out of the garden area, removing or bringing champagne.

FRANK and BETH are standing, mostly their backs to us, in the garden doorway into the brownstone on tip-toes, obviously trying to locate someone inside the preposterously crowded house. MANY PEOPLE stand jabbering and drinking in front of them, and oblivious to them, blocking their entrance and their view. FRANK is looking for CHARLEY. BETH is looking for celebrities.

BETH, whom we really get to know here, is from Texas. Wonderful looking, long, leggy, a hard twang in her speech. SHE is very positive, plain-speaking and very ambitious. Fast-talking and full of life.

The year is 1962. Two years earlier than the previous scene.

(The babble of the cocktail party -- on tape -- continues through the scene, rising and falling in volume as well as changing in texture)

GUESTS (In GROUPS)

HAVE YOU SEEN -- ?
HOW WAS IT -- ?
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS!
DO YOU MEAN -- ?
THAT DOES IT!
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS!

DARLING -- !
WE SAW THE MOST -- !
DARLING!
WE HAD THE BEST -- !

HI!
BLOB.
WE -- !
BLOB.
I -- !
BLOB.
ME -- !
BLOB.

DID YOU READ -- ?
IT'LL NEVER -- !
WE BOUGHT THE FIRST -- !
WHAT THEY NEED -- !
DID YOU EVER -- ?
WAS THAT THE WORST -- ?

ALL

DARLING!
WE SAW THE MOST -- !
DARLING!
WE HAD THE MOST
BEST -- !
IT'S THE FIRST -- !
IT'S THE LOWEST -- !
IT'S THE LATEST -- !
IT'S THE LEAST -- !
IT'S THE WORST -- !
IT'S THE WILDEST -- !
IT'S THE GREATEST -- !
IT'S THE SINGLE -- !
IT'S THE ONLY -- !
IT'S THE PERFECT -- !
IT'S THE BOTTOM -- !
IT'S THE -- !
WOW.
WHEW!
KITSCH.

(Loud babble, fading under dialogue but continuing; ORCHESTRA stops and TED takes over at the piano)

BETH
(At a distance from FRANK, calls to him)
Frank. Frank.

(FRANK looks to her. SHE points to SOMEONE inside the room. FRANK nods. BETH loudly whispers)
It's the Mayor. God.

FRANK
(Impatient. Quieting her with a look)
I know.

BETH
(Gasps. Gasps again)
Frank.
(Points inside the room. Very excited)

FRANK
(Wanting her to stop this)
I see. I see.

BETH
But did you see who she's with? Frank?

FRANK
(Embarrassed)
Beth, I'm not looking for celebrities. I'm looking for Charley.

BETH
Well, Frank, you can do both. I never saw so many famo --
(Stopping herself, BETH suddenly lets out a loud squeal, pointing, and it becomes clear that ALL the blase GUESTS standing in front of them talking have been listening to them as suddenly THEY ALL turn and push to see who it is)

ALL
WHAT?
WHO?
WHERE?
(The GUESTS make a path and through them comes CHARLEY, at whom THEY stare with disappointment)
OH ...

(Very loud babble, continuing more softly under the dialogue; the ORCHESTRA plays very loudly, then stops again, as PIANO MUSIC from TED takes over)

CHARLEY
(Crossing to FRANK, noticing ALL the GUESTS looking at him)
Is my fly open?

(The GUESTS turn back to what THEY were doing)

FRANK
(Exasperated)
It's Beth. She's up there like "lookey, lookey, horsie, horsie."

BETH
(Crossing Down to them)
There's not a celebrity left on the streets of New York, Charley.

FRANK
Beth, these are very sophisticated people.

BETH
(Teasing)
Oh God, if I'd known that I would have worn earrings.

CHARLEY
It wouldn't help.
(To FRANK)
Have you seen her? Did you meet her yet?

BETH
(Loudly. Excited)
Who? Who?

FRANK
Who? Gussie Carnegie, who.

BETH
(Disappointed)
Oh, her.

FRANK
(To CHARLEY)
It's Gussie's house, it's Gussie's party, we're Gussie's guests ...
(Mocking BETH, to her)
"Oh, her."

(The PIANO stops momentarily; loud babble)

FRANK
(Quieting her)
Beth, this could be "it" for me tonight. Everything could change right here, tonight. So let's cool it.

BETH
It's about the first time since I left Texas that everybody I ever dreamed about meeting is here in one room. So you just have to face the facts, Frank, I'm not cool. What I am is
(Nervously loud)
hysterical.

(Very loud babble: ORCHESTRA under)

ALL
DARLING!
WE SAW THE MOST -- !
DARLING!
WE HAD THE MOST
BAD WAS IT GOOD IT'S THE BIGGEST HE'S A GENIUS!
WELL HE CAN'T BUT HE COULD IT'S THE DUMBEST SHE'S A GENIUS!
IT'S THE --

(Babble diminishes but continues; FRANK notices a GROUP in the corner passing a joint)

FRANK
Oh-oh. I think we should go. Let's go inside. Come on.

CHARLEY
What's going on?

FRANK
Those people over there. They're smoking marijuana.

GUESTS
(Murmuring)
-- BEST -- !
IT'S THE FIRST -- !
HE'S A GENIUS!
IT'S THE LEAST -- !
SHE'S A GENIUS!
IT'S THE LOWEST -- !
IT'S THE GREATEST -- '
THEY'RE A GENIUS!

FRANK
(Continuing, simultaneously)
Don't both look at once. God. Just come on. That's illegal.

BETH
I've smelled that before. In the Village. I thought it was autumn.

GUESTS (Continued)
IT'S THE SINGLE IT'S THE ONLY
IT'S THE PERFECT IT'S THE BOTTOM
IT'S THE ONE IT'S THE REAL
IT'S THE TRUE IT'S THE FINAL --

(ORCHESTRA out)

WOW.
WHEW!
HUH.

FRANK
Come on. We'll go inside.
(FRANK has his back to the pot GROUP)

CHARLEY
Wait, Frank.

FRANK
No funny business, Charley. I hate that kind of stuff.

(ORCHESTRA plays very loudly)

CHARLEY
Look. Look.

(FRANK turns and looks to see coming out of the pot GROUP, exhaling smoke, is a very young and very distraught GUSSIE, who is laughing too loudly, putting a very young KATE's hand in a very young ALEX's hand. Babble continues)

(ALL laugh; carrying her glass, GUSSIE turns and heads Right for FRANK'S GROUP)

FRANK
(Putting his hand out)
Hi, I didn't know if you'd recognize me. I'm Franklin Shepard. That's Charley Kringas, who wrote my lyrics. And this is Beth. My wife, Beth.

GUESTS
(Murmuring)
IT DIDN'T -- !
YOU WEREN'T -- !
WE HAVEN'T -- !
YOU COULDN'T
IMPOSSIBLE!
EXTRAORDINARY!
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT -- !

GUSSIE
Recognize you? You're the reason we're giving this bash. According to our accountant, anyway. My husband's an enormous fan of yours.
(To BETH)
You don't mind if I kidnap him a moment?
(Without waiting for a reply, SHE whisks FRANK away; for a moment THEY stand looking at the GUESTS)

GUSSIE
I have invited the richest and most influential people in this town tonight, not one of whom is as rich or influential as you're going to be some day.

ALL
HAVE YOU SEEN -- ? HOW WAS IT -- ?
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS!
YOU MEAN -- ? THAT DOES IT!
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS!

GUSSIE
MEET THE BLOB.
THE BODIES YOU READ ABOUT,
THE ONES WHO KNOW EVERYONE
THAT EVERYONE KNOWS.

GUESTS (In GROUPS)
HI!
DREADFUL!
FABULOUS!

GUSSIE
MEET THE BLOB.
NOT MANY AND YET --

GUESTS (In GROUPS)
OH.
RIGHT ...

GUSSIE
-- YOU NEVER SEE <u>ONE</u>.

GUESTS
WHAT?
<u>NO</u>!

GUSSIE
THEY COME AS A SET.

GUESTS
DON'T!
<u>HIM</u>!

GUSSIE
AND WE'RE IN THEIR DEBT --

GUESTS
BUT WHAT DID <u>YOU</u> THINK?

GUSSIE
'CAUSE HONEYBUNCH,
THEY WRITE THE BOOKS
AND PUT ON THE SHOWS
AND RUN THE SALOONS
AND DESIGN THE CLOTHES.
THEY KEEP US NATIVES ON OUR TOES.

GUESTS
(Solos, like greetings, waving across the room)
ALBEE!
WARHOL!
KUROSAWA!

GUSSIE
THEN THEY READ THE BOOKS
AND GO TO THE SHOWS
AND SWAMP THE SALOONS
WEARING ALL THE CLOTHES.
WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL A GLUT,
BUT
THEY'RE THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE
IN THE MOST IMPORTANT CITY
IN THE MOST IMPORTANT COUNTRY
IN THE YOU-KNOW-WHAT!
(Takes FRANK to a GROUP)

GUESTS
(Waving to each other)
HEAVY!
MILTOWN!
GESTALT!

GUSSIE
Now I'll just say the names and you just say you're an enormous fan of theirs, and watch 'em.
(SHE takes FRANK to a GROUP OF FOUR, and introduces him)

GUSSIE: MR. BLOB. MRS. BLOB.
MR. B: BLOB.
MRS. B: BLOB
GUSSIE: FORMER MAYOR BLOB.
MAYOR: BLOB.
GUSSIE: AND HIS WIFE BLOB. MR. SHEPARD.
WIFE: BLOB!
GUSSIE: MR. BLOB PUBLISHES <u>BLOB</u>.
MR. B: (Modest) BLOB.
MRS. B: (Wry) WHEN HE ISN'T BLOB.
WIFE: (Big sense of humor) DOESN'T EVERYBODY?
MAYOR: (Shocked) BLOB!
MR. B: (Playing along) BLOB!
MRS. B: (Delighted) BLOB!
GUSSIE: MR. SHEPARD HERE WRITES WONDERFUL --
MRS. B: HOW WONDERFUL!
MAYOR: THAT'S WONDERFUL!
WIFE: IT'S WONDERFUL!
MR. B: TERRIFIC!
GUSSIE: GOOD, WE'RE ALL SET THERE.

(MUSIC under -- EVERYBODY changes GROUPS. GUSSIE and FRANK are now with a larger and elegant GROUP)

GUSSIE: COUNTESS BLOB.
COUNTESS: (Introducing her ESCORT) DR. BLOB.
DOCTOR: (Kissing GUSSIE's hand) BLOB. BLOB.
GUSSIE: (Introducing a MAN in a cape)
AND YOU KNOW THE MAESTRO.
THIS IS FRANK SHEPARD.
MR. SHEPARD'S A COMPOSER.
MAESTRO: (Uninterested) BLOB.
GUSSIE: AND A FAN.
MAESTRO: (Wildly animated) BLOB! BLOB! BLOB! BLOB!
BLOB! BLOB! BLOB! BLOB! etc.
COUNTESS: (Overlapping, introducing another COUPLE)
MR. BLOB. MRS. BLOB.
MRS. B: BLOB.
MR. B: BLOB.
MRS. B: (To COUNTESS, spotting someone)
DARLING, THERE GOES BLOB.
COUNTESS: BLOB?
GUSSIE: (As a GROUP OF THREE comes up)
MRS. BLOB. MRS. BLOB.
AND HER MOTHER, MISS BLOB.
MISS B: (To FRANK, attracted)
YOU'RE SO YOUNG TO BE A BLOB.
OTHERS: We'RE IN JAMAICA FOR THE BLOB ...
THEY'RE ASKING SEVEN MILLION BLOB ...
I HEAR HE'S TAKEN OVER BLOB ...
MISS B: (To her DAUGHTER)
BUT HE'S SO YOUNG TO BE A BLOB...
OTHERS: AND IN THE SPRING WE GO TO BLOB ...
AS I WAS SAYING TO THE BLOB ...
I HEAR THE SECOND ACT'S A BLOB ...
MISS B: (To the MAESTRO)
HOW YOUNG WERE YOU WHEN YOU WERE BLOB?
GUSSIE: (To FRANK, overlapping the last part of the above, as SHE spots something across the room)
I SEE GODZILLA'S GETTING SILLY,
AND IT'S TIME TO START THE CHILI --
I'LL BE WITH YOU IN A MILLI-
SECOND -- DON'T DESPAIR.
STAY RIGHT THERE.

(GUSSIE whirls Off; MUSIC stops; Loud babble; FRANK wanders back to BETH and CHARLEY)

BETH
(As PIANO MUSIC resumes)
Frank, I'm sure you enjoyed yourself, because that is the warmest cold woman I've ever met.

FRANK
(Still quieting her)
Beth, to be invited by heavyweights I don't even know is exciting, so I would like to make a good impression.

BETH
Then I won't steal food to take home like I planned. Whatever it is they want you to do, knowing you, you'll probably say 'no'.

(SHE turns to CHARLEY and imitates shooting herself in the temple)

FRANK
I'll see what they have in mind. It's not just up to me.
(Indicating CHARLEY)

CHARLEY
Oh yes it is.

BETH
See if they have in mind a way we could live like this. All I want for us is to be rich as long as we've been poor.

FRANK
I'd love to write a show for him. I just want to write cheap emotions, lots of key changes, ironic twists ...

BETH
You mean hits. Frank, I'm on your side. But, honey, just this once say 'okay.'
(Stops and thinks)
That depends, of course, on what she asks you.
(SHE laughs)

CHARLEY
(Brushing off his red jacket that makes him look quite like the WAITERS)
I'm beginning to wonder if my wife has left me. She probably did. She's probably
(Looks at watch)
remarried by this time. I'll go look for her.

(GUSSIE takes FRANK away and sings another section of "THE BLOB" -- at the end SHE returns him)

GUSSIE
(Grabbing two wine glasses from the WAITER who is passing)
Here, you pretty thing, you don't have any hootch.
(Turning to give one to BETH, GUSSIE, in her haste, spills it all down the front of her)
Oh, no. I'm going to open my veins.

BETH
(Wiping it off)
It's okay.
(Quietly to FRANK)
It better be. Since now I own it.

GUSSIE
(Calling over to the pot GROUP)
Joe. Joe. Hurry up. Hurry. We have a major catastrophe.
(To BETH)
Oh, this is scandalous.

(JOE leaves the GROUP and comes over)

Joe, drop that idiotic smile and take -- oh, excuse me, this is my husband, Joe Josephson. Oh, you know each --
(Wiping off the front of BETH's dress with an available napkin)

GUSSIE (Continued)
Beth, darling, I am prostrate with grief. Please, please forgive me.

JOE
(Slow and smiling)
Listen, you're married to this guy -- don't worry. You're going to have all the dresses you want.

GUSSIE
(Angry at him)
Try not to be dumb, Joe. Just take this gorgeous person up to my closet and she's going to choose some rags of mine. Come on. Move, Joe, please. I'm paralyzed with shame.
(To BETH)
Choose anything you like, darling. Take them all. We'll phone a moving van.

JOE
And talk to my wife, you two. We got something in mind. Maybe crazy.

BETH
Listen, Honey, I don't have to change. This thing will dry. Let me just --

GUSSIE
(Very straight and cold)
Beth, I'm inches from an asylum. Please follow Joe. Joe, now go!

JOE
(Laughing)
With my wife an order becomes a privilege.
(HE kisses her like a child, on the cheek)

GUSSIE
(To JOE, touching her hair in case HE messed it)
Joe, if you don't hurry, I am going to put myself down the garbage disposal.

BETH
(Exiting. Looking down at the very wet dress)
Isn't this going to be wonderful? Walking past all my idols looking like I couldn't hold it? Joe, if you stay close in front of me, it'll be real sweet.

(JOE has seen TERRY and hurries over to embrace her)

Joe! Joe!

(BETH hurries over to catch up to JOE and gets very close behind him, causing ONE or TWO PEOPLE to stare. JOE excuses himself to TERRY, at whom BETH stares in awe, and THEY exit as though glued together with BETH staring back at TERRY)

GUSSIE
(To FRANK, holding a cigarette which BOTH MEN hurry to light)
Your songs are
(In French)
trés impressíve.

FRANK
(Takes out some lead sheets)
I brought a few new ones.

GUSSIE
I love it. You're wonderful.

FRANK
Well, the songs are.

GUSSIE
And so are you.
(Looks at him a long moment. Then quickly turns to CHARLEY)
You are, too. Are you married -- it's Charles, isn't it?

CHARLEY
Charley, yeah. Yeah, I think my wife may be --
(HE indicates the CROWD inside)

GUSSIE
Charley, that's just six hundred of Joseph's closest friends. And this isn't a party, it's work. For him this is the office.

CHARLEY
It's an expensive office.

GUSSIE
Is it?
(Turns to FRANK)
I so envy your talent. I was brought up to do nothing and to be nobody and I excel at both.
(To CHARLEY, getting rid of him)
Charley, I'd love to meet your wife.

CHARLEY
I'd love to meet her, too.
Let me go see.

CHARLEY (Continued)
(To FRANK)
I'll be --
(HE indicates 'somewhere in the house' and exits)

GUSSIE
(After CHARLEY leaves, laughing, to FRANK)
You might as well know that I lie ceaselessly. I don't want to meet his wife.

GUSSIE
Eek. You don't have a drink. Shall I get you one?

(FRANK shakes his head 'no')

Ahh. You don't.

(FRANK shakes 'no')

Then I won't either. See what a good influence you are.
(SHE leans in to say something when TERRY and CHANNING arrive. TERRY, far less over-the-hill than when we last saw her, has her arm around CHANNING, a hopeful movie star but right now a stud)

TERRY
Gussie, it's got to be the best party in the world. Well, the block anyway, All right, this group of houses.
(SHE laughs)
And you don't know this charming young stud, I mean student. Channing.

CHANNING
I always read about you in the society columns and here I am talking to you.

GUSSIE
How sweet. Listen, Terry, I'm talking heavy business right now to this brilliant composer whom you are going to get to know very well very soon.

TERRY
I'm already gone. But I cannot tell you how wonderful, wonderful it is to be living in New York again.

GUSSIE
Wonderful for us, darling.

(TERRY and CHANNING exit but stop en route to be interviewed and photographed by GWEN WILSON)

She's one of those movie stars who's too old for pictures, so now she'll do Broadway shows, and tell everybody this is where she always wanted to be.
(Spots GWEN)
Let's go in there.
(SHE goes ahead of him into the Upstage part of the greenhouse. HE follows. Once THEY are inside all the party sounds stop and even though the party goes on we hear only them)

What's-his-name gave me this greenhouse as a wedding present. He has a tendency to worship me, hmmm.

FRANK
(Looking around)
It's great.

GUSSIE
If you like it take it home. I'm sure because God chose for my parents to divorce practically on their honeymoon that all those devoon folks out there think what's-his-name is my father figure. Actually I married him because, oh hell, he's fun. Old what's-his-name spends dough morning, noon and the other one. And I do get that he's N.O.C.D.

(FRANK looks)

That's 'not our class, dear.'

FRANK
This greenhouse seems as out of place in New York as I am.

GUSSIE
(Meaning more)
Only at first, darling. Now I find it the best thing about this dump. How old are you?

FRANK
Twenty-five. Which doesn't bother me. Then I think 'I'm a quarter of a century' and I freak. So much I want to do and I can't get started. I can't --
(Stops himself)

GUSSIE
Here's something I do when I want to know somebody very well very fast. It's a game. I tell you something honest about

GUSSIE (Continued)
me and you answer right away with something honest about you. I call it 'trading hostages.' I'm very unhappy.
(Pause)
Go on. 'I'm very unhappy.'

FRANK
I'm very happy.

GUSSIE
Hmmm. I grew up rich.

FRANK
I grew up poor.

GUSSIE
I hated my mother.

FRANK
I hated my father.

GUSSIE
Good. I feel superior.

FRANK
I --
(Shrugs shoulders)

GUSSIE
I feel superior.

FRANK
I feel I ... am growing.

GUSSIE
I'm very spoiled.

FRANK
I'm -- not very spoiled.

GUSSIE
I worked as a photographer.

FRANK
I write music.

GUSSIE
I showed horses.

FRANK
I write music.

GUSSIE
I was in advertising.

FRANK
I write music.

GUSSIE
My husband really is a lot of fun.

(FRANK is stopped. GUSSIE rushes on)
Anywho, he's letting me co-produce his next show. It's my birthday present. We both want you to write it. But he wants me to be sure you understand he wants it fast, loud and funny. What do you say?

FRANK
(A second when HE might say 'no,' then quickly)
Okay.

GUSSIE
He's not into subtle, he's not big on depth, what he's about is flash, bam, curtain. Understood?

FRANK
(Not happy)
Okay.

GUSSIE
We're not talking about
(Does quotes)
a "musical." He wants a "vehicle" for that horrible blonde you just met. She's got one hit musical in her, he says, and he wants it. So he wants <u>your</u> stuff <u>his</u> way.

FRANK
(Still bothered)
Okay.

GUSSIE
And what's-his-name said I'd never convince you. You're very O.C.D.
(SHE smiles and turns to leave)
What was that? A second thought?

FRANK
I just --

I just wanted to remember the moment. I always -- do that and swallow. It's like I take a picture, so I'll always have it.

GUSSIE
(Smiles a big smile; then, imitating him)
Okay.

(SHE starts to say something more, but stops herself and exits. FRANK follows. As THEY open the door, the babble bursts upon them, as does MUSIC)

GUESTS

HAVE YOU SEEN -- ?
HOW WAS IT -- ?
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS! etc.
DID YOU READ -- ?
IT'LL NEVER -- !
WE SAW THE FIRST -- ! etc.

GUESTS

DARLING!
WE HAD THE BEST -- !
DARLING!
WE SAW THE MOST

GUSSIE

Look around. These are your new best friends.

GUESTS

BEST IT'S THE FIRST
IT'S THE FINEST IT'S THE LATEST
IT'S THE LEAST IT'S THE WORST
IT'S THE GREATEST IT'S THE LOWEST
IT'S THE SINGLE IT'S THE ONLY
IT'S THE PERFECT IT'S THE BOTTOM
IT'S THE --

GUSSIE

SH!! SH!!
I want all the people who haven't drunk, smoked or sniffed too much to hurry around over here. Mushi, mushi.

(SHE sits on the piano keys to get attention. MUSIC under. As the GUESTS start to gather around the piano, SHE heads back to FRANK)

BETH

(Pushing her way through the GUESTS into the garden, wearing one of Gussie's dresses, which obviously thrills her)

Frank! Frank, will you look at this -- ?

(As SHE's turning around, modelling the dress)

FRANK

(To MARY, who has entered close behind)

Where have you been?

MARY
Trying to get Ev out of the kitchen. You know Evelyn. We walked in the door and it turns out she often works for the people that are doing the catering. So she's out there washing dishes.

(GUSSIE arrives)

BETH
(Uncomfortable)
I hung my dress in your john, Gussie. This one is so beautiful.

GUSSIE
Keep it. I'm too fat to wear it anyway.

BETH
(Introducing them)
Oh, Gussie, Mary.

(THEY nod)

FRANK
I'm going to find Charley.

MARY
He's drying.

GUSSIE
(Stopping him)
Oh no, you're not -- I've got plans for you.
(To MARY)
Mary, would you be as sweet as you look and go get Charley. Thank you this much.
(Kisses her finger and puts in on MARY's nose, then turns to BETH, smiling, as MARY opens her mouth to say something but instead turns angrily and exits)
Your husband is the most talented man I ever heard. I hope it's all right that I'm crazy about him.

BETH
(Smiling back)
I hope it's all right, too.

(GUSSIE hugs BETH and takes FRANK by the arm, leading him to the piano. SHE sits him down, displacing TED, and introduces him to the ASSEMBLAGE)

GUSSIE
(While FRANK noodles on the piano)
All right, now quiet everybody, please. Please listen now, because some day you are going to be able to say, 'I was there when.'

(CHARLEY arrives from the kitchen)

GUSSIE (Continued)
I mean the most exciting composer ever, ever is sitting here right next to me and he's going to play something from a show he's writing and when he finishes playing you are all going to want to swallow poison because there will be nothing more to live for.

(From the brief exchange which follows between FRANK and CHARLEY and which we see but do not hear, it is clear that FRANK welcomes this opportunity and that CHARLEY has at best mixed feelings about it)

So find a place to park it, fermé all those bouches and I am honored to now present Franklin Shepard and Charley ... some funny name. Anyway ...
(GUSSIE makes a face at herself and starts the applause; FRANK starts the Intro on the PIANO)

BETH
(In the silence, to MARY, who entered with CHARLEY)
Can you believe she actually gave me this dress?

CHARLEY
IT STARTED OUT LIKE A SONG.
WE STARTED QUIET AND SLOW,
WITH NO SURPRISE.
AND THEN ONE MORNING I WOKE
TO REALIZE
WE HAD A GOOD THING GOING.

IT'S NOT THAT NOTHING WENT WRONG:
SOME ANGRY MOMENTS, OF COURSE,
BUT JUST A FEW,
AND ONLY MOMENTS, NO MORE,
BECAUSE WE KNEW
WE HAD THIS GOOD THING GOING.

AND IF I WANTED TOO MUCH,
WAS THAT SUCH
A MISTAKE
AT THE TIME?
YOU NEVER WANTED ENOUGH --
ALL RIGHT, TOUGH,
I DON'T MAKE
THAT A CRIME.

AND WHILE IT'S GOING ALONG,
YOU TAKE FOR GRANTED SOME LOVE
WILL WEAR AWAY.
WE TOOK FOR GRANTED A LOT,
BUT STILL I SAY:

CHARLEY (Continued)
IT COULD HAVE KEPT ON GROWING,
INSTEAD OF JUST KEPT ON.
WE HAD A GOOD THING GOING,
GOING,
GONE.

(Much applause, oohing and ahhing.
Calls of 'more,' 'again')

GUSSIE
(Leading applause, yelling)
Keep them right there. We want to hear it again. Tell them.
(To KATE and ALEX)
Wouldn't you just like to live to that music?

ALEX
Look. Goose pimples.

KATE
(Pointing to her eye)
Do you want to see a real tear?

GUSSIE
Down, everybody. Down, down. They're going to do it again.
One mo' time.
(As GUSSIE moves around now organizing
PEOPLE so THEY can see better)

CHARLEY
(To FRANK)
Frank, no. Say 'no.'

FRANK
Charley. They loved it. They thought we were great.

CHARLEY
And you know what true greatness is? It's knowing when to
get off.

FRANK
I'll sing with you. Come on.

(THEY start again, clearly to
CHARLEY's discomfort. MARY and
BETH are on one side of the stage,
separated, watching the performance.
FRANK starts the Intro again)

CHARLEY
IT STARTED OUT LIKE A SONG.
WE STARTED QUIET AND SLOW,
WITH NO SURPRISE.
AND THEN ONE MORNING I WOKE
TO REALIZE --

TERRY
(To SOMEONE next to her, stage whisper)
SO I BOUGHT THIS LITTLE CONDOMINIUM --

COUNTESS
SHH!

CHARLEY
IT'S NOT THAT NOTHING WENT WRONG: SOME ANGRY MOMENTS --

PUBLISHER
DID YOU HEAR -- ?

DOCTOR
NO KIDDING -- !

MAESTRO
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS!

MAYOR'S WIFE
SHH!

KATE
(To MAYOR'S WIFE)
SHH!

JOE
(Humming along)
DADADADADA --

GUSSIE
SHH!

MAYOR
(To SOMEONE ELSE)
IT'S A CLEAR CASE OF TAMMANY POLITICS ...

CHARLEY
-- WE HAD A GOOD THING GOING.

CHARLEY
-- OF COURSE,

CHARLEY
BUT JUST A FEW,

CHARLEY
AND ONLY MOMENTS,

CHARLEY
NO MORE,
BECAUSE WE KNEW --

(CHARLEY and FRANK continue singing, but the GUESTS' attention gradually splinters; THEY start talking to each other and, bit by bit, EVERYONE drifts away from the piano)

PUBLISHER'S WIFE
WE WERE
STUCK IN THE TUNNEL
TILL HALF PAST SIX!

COUNTESS
(To GUSSIE)
DARLING!
THEY'RE PERFECTLY
DARLING!

JOE
(To SOMEONE nearby)
IT'S A SHOW THAT'LL
MURDER 'EM IN THE STICKS ...

TERRY
SO I BOUGHT THIS LITTLE
CHAIN OF LAUNDROMATS ...

(The babble starts again, getting louder and louder, with various cries of "Darling!" and GROUPS shushing each other noisily; there is one moment of silence, during which we can hear CHARLEY)

CHARLEY
... MAKE THAT A CRIME ...

(FRANK plays the piano in the clear for one brief moment, then all hell breaks loose with EVERYONE singing. THEY, and the noise, engulf FRANK and CHARLEY, who become inaudible and invisible)

GROUP I
IT'S ONLY THE BEST
IT'S THE FIRST
IT'S THE FINEST
IT'S THE LATEST
IT'S THE LEAST
IT'S THE WORST
Etc. ...

GROUP II
DID YOU READ -- ?
IT'LL NEVER -- !
THEY JUST DON'T MIX!
WHAT WE NEED -- !
DID YOU EVER -- ?
TILL HALF PAST SIX!
Etc. ...

(When CHARLEY and FRANK have disappeared, along with BETH and MARY and TED, the GUESTS become the COMPANY once more and start to sing the TRANSITION into Scene Three)

INTERMEDIATE

The COMPANY sings a version of "MERRILY WE ROLL ALONG," covering the period 1960-1962, or perhaps the 1950's. The ending of this transition segues into what is the FINALE of BETH, FRANK, TED and CHARLEY's NIGHTCLUB ACT.

(Gradually, the COMPANY disappears, leaving BETH, FRANK, TED and CHARLEY -- in pantomime -- to finish in the nightclub setting. It becomes apparent that the number is a part of their act. After the applause from the patrons of the club, THEY launch into their FINALE:)

BETH, FRANK, TED and CHARLEY
WE'RE AWFULLY GLAD THAT YOU CAME!
WE'RE AWFULLY GLAD YOU WERE WITH US FOR THE NONCE!
NOW TELL YOUR WAITER WHAT EVERYBODY WANTS --
THANK YOU FOR COMING.

TO SAY GOODBYE IS A SHAME.
WE'D SAY HELLO BUT WE SAID THAT AT THE START,
SO ALL WE'LL SAY IS GOODNIGHT AND, FROM THE HEART,
THANK YOU FOR SLUMMING.

THE SHOW, WE KNEW,
MIGHT TWEAK A TOE OR TWO.
AND IF YOU THOUGHT OUR TASTE WAS RANK,
THAT'S WHY THE SHOW'S CALLED "FRANKLY FRANK."

SO PLEASE REMEMBER THE NAME
AND IF YOU LIKED US, THEN WHILE WE HAVE YOUR EAR,
WOULD YOU GO HOME AND TELL EVERYONE WE'RE HERE?
MAKE US A TREND!

GOODNIGHT

TED
FROM TED ...

BETH
AND BETH ...

FRANK
AND FRANK ...

ALL
(Gesturing toward CHARLEY)
AND FRIEND!
THE END.

2-3-39 (5/4/8,)

ACT II

Scene 3

At the culmination of the previous number we have segued and are on stage of a Greenwich Village night-club. The stage and AUDIENCE are on the upper level and the communal dressing room is on the lower level.

The PERFORMERS bow and exit Far Left. BETH hurries down the steps to the dressing room area where we see her hang a sheet during the following (establishing a 'private and concealed' are) and repair her make-up, go from her costume to a robe and actually be very nervous all over the place. TED concealed from the AUDIENCE in the night-club but not from us changes his clothes in his narrow space Far Left. As FRANK talks the MIME comes behind him and imitates exactly the way HE talks and moves and smiles and all of it ... in a touching way that allows us to see FRANK wholly new and become very aware of the drive, enthusiasm, sincerity and dearness that is FRANK. While FRANK talks TED slips onto the piano bench with him and takes over playing and FRANK stands and addresses the AUDIENCE in one ... his back to us ... front to them ... and becomes aware of the MIME 'doing' him and enjoys it while it makes him slightly crazy at the same time.

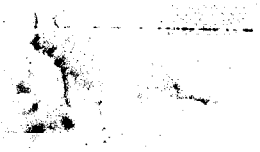
The year is 1960. It is two years earlier than the previous scene.

FRANK
(Sounding like an announcer)
Ladies and gentlemen the cast of our revue "Frankly Frank," now in its fifth successful not quite record-breaking month, thanks you for coming to the Upstairs Room at the Downtown Club. Each of us, potential legends that we are, beg you to tell your friends. In fact we wouldn't mind your enemies. We do two shows every night._____ Except tonight.

(MIME begins indicating FRANK is getting married tonight)

FRANK (Continued)
Cut that out. Anyway, please come back and bring a friend. Or come back and make a friend. Or just come back and be a friend.

(During the above FRANK began trying to trip up the MIME, who is still exacting him in everything by such things as starting suddenly to move, or scratch, or sit, or speak ... it is a lot of fun since each time the MIME is right there)



FRANK leaves the stage and crosses anxiously now into the club's AUDIENCE and over to a very rich and successful looking JOE JOSEPHSON, who is seated alone at a table.

(Shaking hands)
Mr. Josephson. We are all really so excited that you came. All of us. And I -- well, I'm usually light years better. Honest to God. But everybody was just, God, so nervous that you were here. And then, as I told you on the phone, this is a pretty nervous night for me, anyway.

JOE
Is it the girl in the show?

FRANK
(Nodding)
Beth. I met her here five months ago. We just met and --
(Shrugs)

JOSEPH
You're awful young to get married.

FRANK
I'm twenty-three. The guy who does the Mime, our gimmick, is my age and he's been married two years alrea --

(Spots suddenly an OLDER COUPLE sitting nearby and looking very uncomfortable. Stands and says to JOE)

FRANK (Continued)
Would you excuse me one sec --
(Starts to go and turns back to JOE)
Oh, wait. Did you like our songs?

JOSEPH
I can't say I could go out humming them, but you are obviously good. In fact, you are obviously very, very good.

FRANK
(Having to go)
And I'm obviously coming right back. Just hold on, will you, Mr. Josephson? I just -- you know, it's tonight and all.
(FRANK crosses to the uncomfortable OLDER COUPLE. THEY push friendliness, but it is clear THEY like neither FRANK nor this club)

Mr. and Mrs. Spencer? Did you like the show?

MRS. SPENCER
We thought it was real, real catchy. Didn't we?

MR. SPENCER
Fine. Seemed fine. And people pay you for this?

FRANK
(Nods, getting off it)
You can go downstairs right over there and see your daughter. That's down to the dressing room. Want to?

MRS. SPENCER
Want to go see Beth in the dressing room?

MR. SPENCER
Up to you.
(To FRANK)
See, suddenly I'm boss.

MRS. SPENCER
(Gives MR. SPENCER a look)
I guess it's too much to expect some people to act civil.
(To FRANK)
He's upset over this whole wedding thing.

MR. SPENCER
(Chuckles)
I'm upset. That's a good one.
(Turns to MRS. SPENCER)
And you're just tickled pink, huh? Brother.

MRS. SPENCER
(Deciding not to answer him, instead to FRANK)
What he means is we still both wish you and our daughter'll use the brains God gave you instead of rush into this.
(Turns to MR. SPENCER)
God knows there's no talking to young people anymore.

FRANK
(During that HE kept trying to signal to the MIME to go over to JOE JOSEPHSON's table)
Whatever you say is very important to Beth and me.

MR. SPENCER
(Indicating MRS. SPENCER)
You got a dime for this jukebox?

FRANK
Wait one second. Just a second.
(FRANK hurries over to a very young MARY, sitting reading, her back to us, at a table. FRANK grabs her arm, lifting her, and pulls her over to the SPENCER table)
Mr. and Mrs. Spencer, this is Mary Flynn. These are about to be my in-laws, Mary.

(MRS. SPENCER taps her fist to her mouth)

Would you take them down to the dressing room? I'll be right down myself. In a flash. Okay?
(FRANK leaves them and hurries over to the MIME who has taken off his white face and it is CHARLEY, who is wiping off the last of his make-up in a corner off the stage. FRANK has a whole conversation with him about JOE JOSEPHSON which we can't hear but we can see the excitement and enthusiasm between them while MARY helps take the SPENCERS down-stairs)

MARY
(As THEY get up)
Sure. Are you excited about the wedding?

MRS. SPENCER
(Her meaning is clear)
Excited's not the word.

MARY
(Leading them to the steps)
You wouldn't believe how important Frank is going to be someday.

MR. SPENCER
No, I wouldn't.

MRS. SPENCER
Do you work in this show business too?

MARY
(Now leading them down the steps)
Oh no. I'm just an audience. But I have never heard music like Frank's.

MR. SPENCER
Us either.

MARY
(Letting that pass)
I work for Life magazine.

MRS. SPENCER
Now that's a sensible, secure thing to do.

MARY
(SHE's had it)
I hate it.

MRS. SPENCER
Did you ever think maybe that's why they call it 'work'? Oh well, there's no talking to young people today anyhow.

MR. SPENCER
(Points to MRS. SPENCER)
Sounds like a broken record.

MRS. SPENCER
Father?
(SHE stops MR. SPENCER just as THEY are ALL about to enter the lower level dressing room. To MARY)
Honey, you-all go in. I want to talk to Father a minute.

MARY
(Sensing the impending battle)
I'll be in with Beth.
(MARY enters, looking around, crosses behind the hung curtain and out of our sight. MRS. SPENCER in very hushed, very animated and furious gestures gets MR. SPENCER under the bleachers and out of our sight.

While all that has been going on, FRANK, with a boundless enthusiasm, leads CHARLEY, who has changed clothes, but is still dabbing at his face with tissues, over to JOE JOSEPHSON)

FRANK
Mr. Josephson, this is Charley Kringas, who wrote the lyrics. My collaborator.

CHARLEY
(Shaking hands, switching tissue to other hand)
Yeah, I collabor him and he collabors me.
(Shows tissue and continues wiping off face)
See the kind of thing this guy gets me to do.
(Shows the tissue)

JOE
(Going through his wallet)
Very nice. Some very nice things.
(Taking out money. Looking for a WAITER)

FRANK
Take your money, Mr. Josephson, you're our guest.

CHARLEY
I honestly believe someday Frank is going to write the most important music on Broadway.

JOE
I hope he will. He should.
(To FRANK, leaning in to him with a big man-to-man smile)
And about this impending wedding of yours, unless she's pregnant, get out of it.

(CHARLEY looks down, FRANK just stares at him. JOE drops smile and leans back again)
Have a good wedding.
(JOE exits. The only PEOPLE left in the room are close friends, people their age)

FRANK
(Stopped a moment, looks at CHARLEY, uncomfortable. Then)
I've got to get downstairs.
(Starts to leave)

CHARLEY
Frank?

(FRANK turns back)

You know unless you really want to, you don't have to. Nobody can make you.

FRANK
I want to. I know why you think that. But, Charley, I love her. Very much.

(FRANK turns and hurries down the steps, while CHARLEY and the PEOPLE in the club turn the club into a close approximation of a chapel.

As FRANK is about to enter the dressing room, HE becomes aware of the SPENCERS' muffled fighting under the bleachers. HE calls)

Hi. Is that you, Mr. and Mrs. Spencer?

MRS. SPENCER
(Coming out, MR. SPENCER following)
You know Mr. Spencer. Gotta see everything.

(SHE crosses in front of FRANK and into the dressing room. MR. SPENCER follows and as HE passes FRANK, HE holds his head with both hands and shakes it, indicating HE's tired of listening to her)

FRANK
(Enters and sees the sheet hanging)
See, we always have this so Beth has her own dressing room, kind of.

(No response. HE calls over to the other side of the sheet)

Beth? Beth, your folks are here.

BETH (Off)
Momma? How'd you like the show?

MRS. SPENCER
How'd we like it, Father?

MR. SPENCER
Oh, brother, here we go again.

(MRS. SPENCER looks up in the air and sighs a martyred sigh)

BETH (Off)
Daddy? Frank wrote all those songs. He's the most talented composer in the world. The universe.

MRS. SPENCER
Father and I just want to say one thing, Elizabeth.

(BETH slides back the sheet and stands there looking radiant in her white wedding dress and veil. MARY stands awkwardly behind her, buttoning the back)

BETH
Momma, you've said it all. For two days.

MRS. SPENCER
(Shouting. Pointing at FRANK)
He doesn't even have a real job! You told me you were goin' back to bein' a legal secretary to support him!

BETH
(Shouting back)
Momma --

FRANK
(Getting between them, interrupting)
Mrs. Spencer, what I want isn't to play in this club. I want to write music. And to be able to do that, I play here, and I accompany singers at auditions, I play for dance classes, I do arrangements, I do anything so I can go on writing my music.

CHARLEY
(Rushing in with TED, who changes clothes in front of them)
The minister just got here.

MR. SPENCER
Well, they got a minister.

CHARLEY
He wants to get started right now.

TED
(Touching the hanging sheet)
What's the sheet that covers the piano doing hanging up here?

BETH
(Drawing attention away, to CHARLEY)
Where's Evelyn?

CHARLEY
(To the SPENCERS)
Evelyn's my wife.
(To BETH)
She's upstairs, way, way in the back of the room, because they often have to stop weddings because of her sobbing. Which I try not to take personally.

MARY
(To MRS. SPENCER)
Why don't I go up and sit with you?

MRS. SPENCER
(A long look at the floor, then at BETH. Then to MARY)
All right.
(Wants to go but SHE's stopped. Then taking off a ring)
Here's Grandma Tuerk's ring.
(SHE holds the ring out at arm's length. BETH takes it at arm's length. A moment, and clearly an intimate one. FRANK exits quickly behind the sheet to leave them alone; TED and CHARLEY look away. MRS. SPENCER turns and leaves, and with something unresolved, starts upstairs to the club with MARY, where PEOPLE sit waiting for the wedding now. SHE stops on the stairs, waiting to be called back. MARY, understanding, stands awkwardly waiting for her. BETH, also unable to respond, puts the ring in her purse and goes behind the sheet to join FRANK. THEY look at each other, reassuringly)

BETH
(Sings)
HONEY ...
(Whispers)
IT'S GONNA BE FINE

IT'S BOUND TO FEEL FUNNY
AT FIRST --
HANG ON TO THE LINE.

WE'RE GONNA BE
HAPPY --
(Getting louder)
-- AND RICH,

AND OPENLY LOVE IT.

WE'LL HARDLY KNOW
WHICH OF THE TWO IS WHICH,
WE'LL HAVE SO MUCH OF IT.

SH!
(Firmly)
HONEY ...

FRANK
(Sings)
SH! NOT SO LOUD ...
(Whispers)
I THINK WE'LL MAKE IT ...

AT FIRST ... I KNOW ...
BUT HANG ON
AND YOU'LL NEVER REGRET IT.
I PROMISE ...

RIGHT ...

YOU BET ...

I JUST WISH I HAD MORE
I COULD GIVE YOU ...

(Getting louder)
IT'S NOT JUST THE BABY --
(Whispers)
I HOPE YOU KNOW THAT.

BETH (Continued)
(Whispers)
IT'S GONNA TURN OUT
FOR THE BEST.
I KNOW, 'CAUSE I'VE
NEVER BEEN SO DEPRESSED
AND SO GLAD OF MY LUCK.

HONEY, TRUST ME ...

BUT REMEMBER, IT'S JUST ME ...
(Louder)
THEN, HONEY,
EVERYONE IN THE WORLD
CAN GO MILK A DUCK!

FRANK (Continued)
NO, ALL I MEANT WAS
IT'LL TURN OUT
FOR THE BEST ...

YOUR LUCK? MY LUCK! ...

THAT'S UNDERSTOOD ...
(Holding her)
GOD, YOU FEEL GOOD ...

(MUSIC continues under. The FIVE PEOPLE in the other half of the room have been listening in varying degrees of embarrassment and delight)

MRS. SPENCER
(After a pause, yelling through the sheet)
Beth, you better hurry. Your father's getting antsy.

MR. SPENCER
(From the top of the stairs)
Will you stop telling people how I'm getting?

MRS. SPENCER
(To MARY)
See, he's antsy.

MR. SPENCER
(To TED and CHARLEY)
Well, at least he's not black.
(Exits)

MRS. SPENCER
(Starting into the nightclub with MARY)
Well, at least she's not pregnant.

(TED and CHARLEY exchange glances. Behind the sheet, FRANK looks at BETH, seriously and sweetly)

FRANK
(Sings)
NOT A DAY GOES BY
NOT A SINGLE DAY
YOU'RE NOT SOMEWHERE A PART OF MY LIFE,
AND I NEED YOU TO STAY.

FRANK (Continued)
AS THE DAYS GO BY,
I KEEP THINKING, "WHEN DOES IT END?",
THAT IT CAN'T GET MUCH BETTER MUCH LONGER.
BUT IT ONLY GETS BETTER AND STRONGER
AND DEEPER AND NEARER
AND SIMPLER AND FREER AND RICHER AND CLEARER AND
NO, NOT A DAY GOES BY,
NOT A BLESSED DAY,
BUT YOU SOMEWHERE COME INTO MY LIFE
AND YOU DON'T GO AWAY.

AND I HAVE TO SAY,
IF YOU DO, I'LL DIE.
I WANT DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER DAY AFTER DAY
TILL THE DAYS GO BY!

BETH
WE'VE GOT DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER DAY AFTER DAY
AFTER DAY
TILL THE DAYS GO BY!

(THEY have been smiling through this; now THEY start to giggle. Suddenly, FRANK draws her to him and kisses her. MUSIC continues under. THEY break when THEY hear MR. SPENCER speak)

MR. SPENCER
(Loudly, for BETH's benefit)
They say it's bad luck to see the bride before the wedding.
(To TED and CHARLEY)
But of course, who is "they"? I been wondering all my life. Maybe "they" is parents.
(HE waves TED and CHARLEY up the steps to indicate THEY shouldn't wait for him. THEY exit upstairs, where TED sits at the piano)

FRANK & BETH
(Singing, heads on each other's shoulders)
HONEY --

BETH
Mmm ...

FRANK
WE BEAT IT THIS FAR.

BETH
I SURELY LOVE YOU ...

FRANK
WE'RE GONNA BE DIFFERENT THAN ALL THE REST --

BETH
(Looking down at her stomach)
WE ALREADY ARE.

FRANK
WE'RE GONNA BE HAPPY AND SAD --

BETH
-- AND CHANGING AND GROWING.

FRANK
THE PROSPECT OF DRIVING YOUR PARENTS MAD
WILL HELP US KEEP GOING.

BETH
IT'S NOT JUST YOUR TALENT,
I HOPE YOU KNOW THAT ...

FRANK
HONEY --

FRANK
IT'S GONNA
TURN OUT FOR THE BEST.

BETH
GOD, WE'RE SO CRAZY, BUT IT'LL
TURN OUT FOR THE BEST.

BETH
I HOPE SO, I'VE NEVER BEEN SO DEPRESSED
OR SO HIGH ON THE VINE.

FRANK
LONG AS EVERYTHING COMES OUT OF LOVE ...

BETH
HONEY --

BOTH
TRUST ME,
BUT REMEMBER IT'S JUST ME,
AND, HONEY --
(THEY look at each other, smiling)
IT'S GONNA BE FINE.

(Upstairs, TED starts to play the WEDDING MARCH. FRANK and BETH come from behind the sheet. FRANK gives BETH to MR. SPENCER and goes up and into the nightclub. Suddenly, on an impulse, BETH grabs MR. SPENCER and hugs him tightly.

FRANK and CHARLEY shake hands with the MINISTER Downstage Center, who stands waiting, his back to us, and BETH comes up the steps on her FATHER's arm. Her FATHER gives her arm to FRANK and joins his WIFE)

MINISTER
Ladies and gentlemen, good evening. Before the vows, Frank and Beth have asked to speak. Beth.

BETH
(Steps forward a foot)
Frank, I am so happy to be marrying you in the place where I met you and grew to love you. Actually, I'm just happy to marry you, period.
(With a big smile and laughter from the room, SHE steps back)

FRANK
(Stepping forward a foot. To the room)
Thank you for sharing the most important moment in our lives.
(To BETH)
Beth, I only want to say I love you with all my heart, because you make possible the best of me. Thank you.
(FRANK steps back and THEY face the MINISTER)

MINISTER
(As HE talks, FRANK takes BETH's hand and THEY hold tight)
Dearly beloved, we are gathered here in the sight of God and in the face of this community to join together ...

(And as HE continues we hear, from the background, EVELYN's increasing sobs. CHARLEY is throwing up his hands and leans out of the wedding party, where HE is best man, to signal a 'shhh' to her. The lights fade and then out)

INTERMEDIATE

OPENING DOORS: 1957-1959

As the nightclub set is being removed CHARLEY appears at a portable electric typewriter; FRANK is at a piano, pencil in mouth, manuscript paper spread in front of him.

CHARLEY: (Types)
FRANK: (Picks out a phrase)
CHARLEY: (Types)
FRANK: (Plays the phrase, changing two notes; we now recognize it as the front strain of the sign-off song from the nightclub)
CHARLEY: (Types, a bit more energetically; the BELL rings; HE returns the carriage, rolls it up, starts to read what HE has written)
FRANK: (Changes another note)
CHARLEY: (Grunts in displeasure)
FRANK: (Tries another note)
CHARLEY: (Rolls the carriage down)
FRANK: (Tries another note, getting desperate)
CHARLEY (X's out what HE has written)
FRANK: (Tries the phrase again, then another note, finally SLAMS his fist down in the bass and throws the pencil down in disgust)

(MUSIC under)

FRANK: (Speaks) HOW'S IT GOING?
CHARLEY: GOOD. YOU?
FRANK: FAIR.
CHARLEY: YEAH, TELL ME.
(The PHONE rings; FRANK answers)
FRANK: CHINESE LAUNDRY.
(LIGHT on MARY at her desk, phoning)
MARY: HI.
FRANK: (To CHARLEY) MARY.
CHARLEY: SAY HELLO.
MARY: (Sings) I THINK I GOT A JOB.
FRANK: (Speaks) WHERE?
MARY: (Speaks) TRUE ROMANCES.
FRANK POSING?
MARY: THANK YOU. WRITING CAPTIONS.
FRANK: WHAT ABOUT THE BOOK?
MARY: WHAT ABOUT THE BOOK?
FRANK: NOTHING, ARE YOU WORKING ON THE BOOK?
MARY: YES ...
FRANK: GOOD.
MARY: NO ...

FRANK (Admonishing) MARY --
MARY: RIGHT, I KNOW, YES, ME AND BALZAC ...
CHARLEY: (Types)
FRANK: (Adds a chord to the tune)
MARY: (Types slowly, looking up at the carriage after each letter)
CHARLEY: (Types with enthusiasm)
FRANK: (Tries two chords)
CHARLEY: (Rolls the carriage up and reads)
FRANK: (Tries another chord combination)
MARY: (Types)
CHARLEY: (Rolls the carriage down and starts X'ing out what HE has written as MARY continues typing)
FRANK: (Plays the phrase with two new chords, then whistles it while writing it down)
MARY: (Reads what SHE has written, groans, lights a cigarette, slumps in despair)
CHARLEY: (Slumps in despair)
FRANK: (Sighs, puts the pencil down, slumps)

(MUSIC continues under. MARY, FRANK and CHARLEY look at each other, then start to sing quickly, bouncing their statements off each other and us)

CHARLEY: I FINISHED THE ONE-ACT.
FRANK: I GOT AN AUDITION --
MARY: I STARTED THE STORY.
FRANK: REHEARSAL PIANIST.
CHARLEY: SO WHERE ARE WE EATING?
MARY: I'M MOVING TO PLAYBOY.
FRANK: THE PUBLISHER CALLED ME.
CHARLEY: I'M DOING A REWRITE.
MARY: MY PARENTS ARE COMING.
FRANK: I SAW "MY FAIR LADY."
CHARLEY: I REWROTE THE REWRITE.
FRANK: I SORT OF ENJOYED IT.
MARY: I THREW OUT THE STORY.
CHARLEY: I'M MEETING AN AGENT.
ALL: WE'LL ALL GET TOGETHER ON SUNDAY.

WE'RE OPENING DOORS,
SINGING, "HERE WE ARE!"
WE'RE FILLING UP DAYS
ON A DIME.
THAT FARAWAY SHORE'S
LOOKING NOT TOO FAR.
WE'RE FOLLOWING EVERY STAR --
THERE'S NOT ENOUGH TIME!

(MUSIC continues under; the stage becomes alive with activity: CHARLEY being interviewed by an AGENT, FRANK playing the same bars of rehearsal music over and over while a SINGER or DANCER(S) rehearse; MARY talking to an EDITOR, etc.

FRANK suddenly gets an idea, plays his phrase right in the middle of the "rehearsal" and writes it down excitedly, then comes together with CHARLEY and MARY. THEY sing)

FRANK: I CALLED A PRODUCER.
CHARLEY: I SENT OFF THE ONE-ACT.
MARY: I STARTED THE STORY.
FRANK: HE SAID TO COME SEE HIM.
CHARLEY: I DROPPED OUT OF COLLEGE.
MARY: I MET THIS MUSICIAN.
FRANK: I'M PLAYING A NIGHTCLUB.
CHARLEY: THEY'RE DOING MY ONE-ACT!
MARY: I'M WORKING FOR REDBOOK.
FRANK: I REWROTE THE BALLAD.
MARY: I FINISHED THE STORY.
CHARLEY: WE STARTED REHEARSALS.
MARY: I THREW OUT THE STORY
AND THEN THE MUSICIAN.
I'M MOVING TO POPULAR SCIENCE.

ALL: WE'RE OPENING DOORS,
SINGING, "LOOK WHO'S HERE!",
BEGINNING TO SAIL
ON A DIME.
THAT FARAWAY SHORE'S
GETTING VERY NEAR!
WE HAVEN'T A THING TO FEAR --
WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME!

(ALL THREE throw themselves simultaneously into activity as MUSIC continues under; CHARLEY and MARY type ferociously while FRANK whistles and hums as HE tries out different vamps for his tune. After a bit, HE hits a chord triumphantly, turns, and looks over at CHARLEY, as MARY picks up her phone and starts to dial)

FRANK: HOW'S IT COMING?
CHARLEY: GOOD. YOU?
FRANK: DONE.
CHARLEY: ONE MINUTE ...
(The PHONE rings; FRANK answers)
FRANK: HAMBURG HEAVEN.
MARY: HI.
FRANK: (To CHARLEY) MARY.
CHARLEY: SAY HELLO.
MARY: (Sings) I GOT ANOTHER JOB.
FRANK: WHERE?
MARY: CHIC.
FRANK: WHAT'S THAT?
MARY: A BRAND NEW CONCEPT:
POP-UP PICTURES.
FRANK: WHAT ABOUT THE BOOK?
MARY: WHAT ABOUT THE BOOK?
FRANK: DID YOU GIVE THE PUBLISHER THE BOOK?
MARY: YES ...
FRANK: GOOD.
MARY: NO ...
FRANK: (Admonishing) MARY --
MARY: LOOK, I --
CHARLEY: (Ripping the paper out of the typewriter)
FINISHED!
FRANK: (Into phone) LET ME CALL YOU BACK.
MARY: RIGHT.
(Hangs up; LIGHT OUT)
CHARLEY: (Coming to FRANK) THIS IS JUST A DRAFT.
FRANK: RIGHT.
CHARLEY: PROBABLY IT STINKS.
FRANK: RIGHT.
CHARLEY: I HAVEN'T HAD THE TIME TO DO A POLISH --
FRANK: WILL YOU SING!!
CHARLEY: RIGHT.
(Sings, as FRANK accompanies him;
it is the Nightclub sign-off,
in a different arrangement)
WHO WANTS TO LIVE IN NEW YORK?
WHO WANTS THE WORRY, THE NOISE, THE DIRT, THE HEAT?
WHO WANTS THE GARBAGE CANS CLANGING IN THE STREET?
SUDDENLY I DO.

THEY'RE ALWAYS POPPING THEIR CORK -- I hate that line --
THE COPS, THE CABBIES, THE SALESGIRLS UP AT SAKS,
YOU GOTTA HAVE A REAL TASTE FOR MANIACS --
SUDDENLY I DO!
(During the above, JOE JOSEPHSON has
appeared and started to listen
judiciously; FRANK and CHARLEY are
auditioning for him)

JOE
(Interrupting them, all smiles)
THAT'S GREAT! THAT'S SWELL!
THE OTHER STUFF AS WELL.
IT ISN'T EVERY DAY
I HEAR A SCORE THIS STRONG
BUT FELLAS, IF I MAY,
THERE'S ONLY ONE THING WRONG:
(To FRANK's tune)
THERE'S NOT A TUNE YOU CAN HUM.
THERE'S NOT A TUNE YOU GO BUM-BUM-BUM-DI-DUM.
YOU NEED A TUNE YOU CAN BUM-BUM-BUM-DI-DUM --
GIVE ME A MELODY!

WHY CAN'T YOU THROW 'EM A CRUMB?
WHAT'S WRONG WITH LETTING 'EM TAP THEIR TOES A BIT?
I'LL LET YOU KNOW WHEN STRAVINSKY HAS A HIT --
GIVE ME SOME MELODY!

(Perhaps OTHER PRODUCERS join him)
OH SURE, I KNOW,
IT'S NOT THAT KIND OF SHOW.
BUT CAN'T YOU HAVE A SCORE
THAT'S SORT OF IN BETWEEN?
LOOK, PLAY A LITTLE MORE,
I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT I MEAN ...
(FRANK resumes at the piano)

CHARLEY
(Overselling)
WHO WANTS TO LIVE IN NEW YORK?
I ALWAYS HATED THE DIRT, THE HEAT, THE NOISE.
BUT EVER SINCE I MET YOU, I --

JOE
(Shaking his head, still smiling)
LISTEN, BOYS,
MAYBE IT'S ME,
BUT THAT'S JUST NOT A HUMMMMMMMMMMMMMMABLE MELODY!
(As the set revolves him and the
OTHER PRODUCERS away)
WRITE MORE, WORK HARD --
LEAVE YOUR NAME WITH THE GIRL.
LESS AVANT-GARDE --
LEAVE YOUR NAME WITH THE GIRL.
JUST WRITE A PLAIN OLD MELODEE-DEE-DEE-DEE-DEE-DEE ...
(HE is humming "Some Enchanted Evening" --
incorrectly)
DEE-DEE-DEE-DEE-DEE-DEE ...

(FRANK and CHARLEY stand dejectedly
for a moment)

CHARLEY: THEY'RE STOPPING REHEARSALS.
THEY RAN OUT OF MONEY ...
(Light up on MARY)
MARY: WE LASTED ONE ISSUE.
MY BOOK WAS REJECTED ...
FRANK: THE NIGHTCLUB WAS RAIDED.
I HAVE TO START COACHING ...
MARY: MY PARENTS ARE COMING.
CHARLEY: THEY SCREWED UP THE LAUNDRY.
FRANK: MY WALLET WAS STOLEN.
MARY: I SAW THE MUSICIAN.
CHARLEY: WE'RE BEING EVICTED.
MARY: I'M HAVING A BREAKDOWN.
ALL: WE'LL ALL GET TOGETHER ON SUNDAY.

THEY'RE SLAMMING THE DOORS,
SINGING, "GO AWAY!"
IT'S LESS OF A SAIL
THAN A CLIMB.
THAT FARAWAY SHORE'S
FARTHER EVERY DAY.
WE'RE LEARNING TO RICOCHET ...
WE STILL HAVE A LOT TO SAY ...
(A beat)
FRANK: YOU KNOW WHAT WE'LL DO
CHARLEY: WHAT?
FRANK: WE'LL DO A REVUE.
CHARLEY: WHAT?
MARY: WHAT?
FRANK: WE'LL DO A REVUE OF OUR OWN!
MARY: WHAT?
CHARLEY: WHERE?
MARY: WHY?
CHARLEY: WHEN?
FRANK: NOT JUST SONGS BUT STORIES, SCENES,
PIANO PIECES, MIME --
CHARLEY: YEAH!
MARY: (Pantomiming a sign) "THE WRITERS' BLOCK" ...
FRANK: A SHOWCASE OF OUR OWN!
CHARLEY: WHERE?
FRANK: THE CLUB'S REOPENING.
MARY: WE'LL WRITE A LOT OF NEW STUFF --
CHARLEY: -- REWRITE OLD STUFF --
FRANK: WHAT ABOUT THE GIRL?
CHARLEY: WHAT ABOUT THE GIRL?
FRANK: ONLY THAT WE'RE GONNA NEED A GIRL.
CHARLEY: WELL, MARY --
MARY: THANKS, I DON'T PERFORM EXCEPT AT DINNER.

(During the above, TWO GIRLS and a PIANIST -- TED -- have appeared with rehearsal copies of music, ready to audition. The FIRST GIRL starts, accompanied by TED; FRANK,

MARY and CHARLEY watch, with polite but growing lack of enthusiasm)

FIRST GIRL
(Shrilly, as TED plays "THANK YOU FOR COMING")
WE'RE AWFULLY GLAD THAT YOU CAME.
WE'RE GLAD YOU FOUND US AND MADE IT PAST THE DRUNKS.
WE'RE EVEN GLADDER YOU'RE NOT AT JULIUS MONK'S --

FRANK
(Polite dismissal, speaks)
Thank you for coming.

(The SECOND GIRL -- BETH -- steps up)

Next eight, please.

BETH
WE ONLY HAVE BUT ONE AIM --

FRANK
(To TED)
Up a tone.

(TED obliges, as does BETH)

BETH
-- TO MAKE YOU HAPPY AND HELP RELAX THE KINKS --

FRANK
(Exchanging a look of approval with MARY and CHARLEY)
Up a tone.

BETH
-- THE JOKES ARE CHEAP, BUT AT LEAST SO ARE THE DRINKS --

FRANK
Thank you. You're hired.

(BETH is thrilled; TED starts to leave)

BETH
(Offers her hand)
I'M BETH.

FRANK
I'M FRANK.

BETH
I REALLY THOUGHT I STANK.

MARY
(Offers her hand)
I'M MARY.

CHARLEY
(The same)
CHARLEY.

FRANK
BY THE WAY,
I'M TOLD WE OPEN SATURDAY --

(Music under)

OTHERS: WHAT?!
MARY: YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS!
CHARLEY: NOBODY'S READY!
FRANK: APPARENTLY SOMEBODY CANCELLED A BOOKING.
CHARLEY: WITH FOUR SONGS TO GO -- ?
MARY: YES, AND WHAT ABOUT COSTUMES?
BETH: AND HOW DO I LEARN ALL THESE NUMBERS?
FRANK: (To TED, as HE is leaving) HEY, WHAT'S-YOUR-NAME --
TED: TED.

(Simultaneously)

FRANK: DO YOU WANT TO PLAY SECOND PIANO?
TED: WHY NOT? BUT I'LL HAVE TO HAVE ALL OF THE MUSIC AND SATURDAY I GOTTA PLAY A BAR MITZVAH -- SAY WAIT A SEC, I GOT A COUPLE OF NUMBERS --

CHARLEY: NOT TO MENTION I STILL HAVEN'T FINISHED THE SYNANON SONG OR THE KENNEDY NUMBER --
FRANK: YOU DON'T HAVE TO, WE'LL SEGUE THE END OF IT INTO THE DANCE WE CUT OUT --
CHARLEY: -- AND WHAT'LL WE DO ABOUT GETTING PUBLICITY, RUN AROUND TOWN PUTTING STICKERS ON WINDOWS -- ?

MARY: AND HAVE WE DECIDED OR NOT ON THE RESTAURANT SKETCH? I NEED TWO OR THREE DAYS TO REPLACE IT --
FRANK: NO, WE'LL USE IT BUT NOT WITH THE LONG INTRODUCTION --

ALL
WE'LL WORRY ABOUT IT ON SUNDAY!

WE'RE OPENING DOORS,
SINGING, "HERE AGAIN!"
WE'RE RISKING IT ALL
ON A DIME.
THAT FARAWAY SHORE'S
LOOKING NEAR AGAIN,
THE ONLY THING LEFT IS WHEN,
WE KNOW WE SHOULD COUNT TO TEN --
WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME!

ACT II

Scene 4

The time is five thirty AM, just before dawn, on New York City's 110th street. We are on a roof top of an old tenement building. The stage is dark with only the rooftop lights and the declining moon for light.
The Stage is bare. On Center Stage a bleacher is turned on its end raising high toward the overhead fly-area. It is a water tank. The type still prevalent on the tops of old cold-water flat buildings in the fifties. The other bleacher is almost completely Offstage Right. Only the triangular opened end is visible Onstage, which becomes, for PEOPLE entering through the triangular opening, the wooden covering shell that is c .. the stair well leading up to the roof. In the distance, at the rear of the Stage, we see the tops of buildings in the further uptown area as viewed from the top of a building. Out front (the audience) will be the downtown view, which is where our CHARACTERS will be looking in the scene.

Two clotheslines are hung from the water tank to Offstage Left, with clothing hung by the Italian/Jewish ladies in the building.

FRANK is sitting on the roof, in his Army uniform, reading scripts on his knees. His hands are tucked under his arms and his legs close together. It is very cool. CHARLIE enters through the triangular doorway wearing a button down shirt, khakis and loafers. HE is putting on a sportscoat and turning up the collar from the chill.

When FRANK hears the sounds of CHARLEY HE puts the scripts away and holds the binoculars up to his eyes and seems to be looking over the city.

The year is 1957. Three years earlier than the previous scene.

CHARLEY
(In a middle-of-the-night whisper)
What are you doing up on the roof?

FRANK
(Also quiet)
I came up here.

CHARLEY
Well, you could have told a person.

FRANK
You were asleep.

CHARLEY
(Looks at watch)
The alarm just went off. See anything?

(FRANK shakes his head 'no')

Are you mad at me?

FRANK
No.

CHARLEY
What are you doing up here so early?

FRANK
I couldn't sleep.

(Holds up manuscripts)
Charley, I read two of your plays. They're so wonderful I couldn't sleep.

CHARLEY
I thought you were mad. I have to tell all the people who stay overnight to always wake me whenever they think I'm wonderful.

FRANK
I lay there and tossed and turned and kept thinking about wasting those two years and then to come back and read this.

CHARLEY
Wasting? That music you played for me --

FRANK
(Interrupting)
You told me. But now I get it.

(MUSIC under)

I didn't waste it, Charley. I was writing every spare minute I could find over there. I didn't waste it. Charley, we're going to change the world.

(Sings)
SOMETHING IS STIRRING,
SHIFTING GROUND ...
IT'S JUST BEGUN.
EDGES ARE BLURRING
ALL AROUND,
AND YESTERDAY IS DONE.

FEEL THE FLOW,
HEAR WHAT'S HAPPENING:
WE'RE WHAT'S HAPPENING.
DON'T YOU KNOW?
WE'RE THE MOVERS AND WE'RE THE SHAPERS.
WE'RE THE NAMES IN TOMORROW PAPERS.
UP TO US, MAN, TO SHOW 'EM ...

IT'S OUR TIME, BREATHE IT IN:
WORLDS TO CHANGE AND WORLDS TO WIN.
OUR TURN COMING THROUGH,
ME AND YOU, MAN,
ME AND YOU!

(MUSIC continues under.

MARY enters from the triangular doorway entrance. MARY, very young, in a robe and pajamas and with free flowing hair, also carries a pair of binoculars. SHE sees the TWO MEN and with an 'oh' starts back inside)

CHARLEY
(Eager, trying to stop her with his voice)
Hi.

(SHE doesn't come back)

Hi! Hi!

(Whispering to FRANK)
It's a girl!

(FRANK turns to look as, gingerly, MARY comes back to the entranceway)

FRANK
(Looking at watch)
Better hurry up. It's just about time.

MARY
We just wanted to see. My roommate and -- excuse me.
(SHE turns abruptly and hurriedly exits)

FRANK
(Excited)
What was that?

CHARLEY
You have been away a long time.

FRANK
I mean what made her go?

CHARLEY
She's probably from Barnard. Barnard girls are tough.

FRANK
Maybe she went to get her roommate.

CHARLEY
Maybe she went to get a cop.

FRANK
(Trying to see his watch in the dark)
What time is it? Exactly.

CHARLEY
(Looking at his watch)
Exactly ... five forty-two.

FRANK
Charley, I know your eyes were bad enough to keep you out of the Army, but did you see what she looked like?

CHARLEY
Yes. And obviously she saw what we looked like. Just pray she comes back. And that she's not from Barnard.

FRANK
Oh, I don't know.
(Smiles)
I did alright over there.

CHARLEY
(Stopped by the implication)
You -- did you -- you do it?

FRANK
(Nods. Then smugly)
Twice.

CHARLEY
Bull.

FRANK
I did. Twice.

CHARLEY
You're bull. You did not.

(FRANK nods. Then holds up two fingers)

Me, too. Twice.

(THEY laugh and start boxing around)

FRANK
(Suddenly serious)
Who? Who'd you do it to?

CHARLEY
Those Barnard girls aren't all tough.

FRANK
Charley, what time is it now?

CHARLEY
(Looks at watch)
Quarter to six. You ever thing abo[illegible]g married?

FRANK
No.

CHARLEY
Me either.

FRANK
But I would have died if I turned twenty and never did it.

CHARLEY
I would have killed myself.

FRANK
Someday I'll get married. But when I'm a lot older. Like thirty, I might.

CHARLEY
That's when I might.

FRANK
(Looking around at the sky, sings)
FEEL HOW IT QUIVERS,
ON THE BRINK ...

CHARLEY
WHAT?

FRANK
EVERYTHING!
GIVES YOU THE SHIVERS,
MAKES YOU THINK
THERE'S STUFF YOU WANT TO SING!

AND YOU AND ME,
WE'LL BE SINGING IT LIKE THE BIRDS,
ME WITH MUSIC AND YOU WITH WORDS,
TELL 'EM THINGS THEY DON'T KNOW!

BOTH
UP TO US, PAL, TO SHOW 'EM ...

OUR TIME, BREATHE IT IN:
WORLDS TO CHANGE AND WORLDS TO WIN,
OUR TURN, WE'RE WHAT'S NEW,
ME AND YOU, PAL, ME AND YOU!

FEEL THE FLOW, HEAR WHAT'S HAPPENING:
WE'RE WHAT'S HAPPENING!
LONG AGO
ALL WE HAD WAS THAT FUNNY FEELING,
SAYING SOMEDAY WE'D SEND 'EM REELING,
NOW IT LOOKS LIKE WE CAN! ...

CHARLEY
SOME DAY JUST BEGAN.

BOTH
IT'S OUR HEADS ON THE BLOCK.
GIVE US ROOM AND START THE CLOCK.
OUR TIME -- COMING THROUGH!
ME AND YOU, PAL,
ME AND YOU!
ME AND YOU!

(MUSIC fades under)

FRANK
(Looks out over the audience)
Should be just about now. ...

CHARLEY
Still have a couple of --
(HE looks up to see MARY in the triangular doorway again. SHE has hurriedly dressed in the preppy look of the 50's: grey flannel skirt, sweater, loafers and a camel's hair coat, with a belt in the back. SHE is carrying binoculars still)

MARY
(Trying to lighten her embarrassment)
I didn't mean to be so overdressed before. Am I too late?

FRANK
No, not at all. Just about now.

MARY
My roommate is coming up, too.

CHARLEY
I'm Charley Kringas and this is Frank Shepard. We just took the apartment on five. And we're very safe. Too safe.

MARY
I just woke her up. But I should have told --
(SHE is starting to go again)

FRANK
(Interrupting, trying to get her to stay)
I'm not officially moved in until my discharge next week. I was almost two years in Special Services in Korea. Where there are no Special Services. I'm just on a weekend pass.
(Nods. Does SHE know it.)
Fort Dix?

(Shakes head. SHE doesn't)

But I get discharged the end of next week. You can see best over here.

(MARY starts again for her roommate when CHARLEY stops her)

CHARLEY
Frank just got a weekend pass to help us move in. A lot to move in. A piano, a typewriter and two mattresses.

MARY
(Surprised, to FRANK)
Are you the one playing the piano the last two days?

FRANK
(To CHARLEY)
We're evicted.

MARY
Oh, no. You're wonderful. Sincerely wonderful.

FRANK
I'm sincerely grateful.

MARY
I even came up here on the roof to hear you better.
(Shrugs at her stupid revelation)
I tell everything. Then go home and suffer.

CHARLEY
Give her my plays.

MARY
(To CHARLEY, teasing herself)
Are you sincerely wonderful, too?

CHARLEY
I write.

FRANK
He is.

CHARLEY
I'm at Columbia. He's going to Julliard.

MARY
That's what I want to do. Write. And I don't mean as opposed to typing.

CHARLEY
Are you in school?

MARY
School of Hard Knocks. I'm at Offic[illegible]emp. I got out of school last June. I went to Stephens College for Women.

(CHARLEY subtly pokes FRANK)

It's only two years at Stephens.

FRANK
Where you from?

MARY
Providence. And it's not divine. Actually all I ever did was read[illegible] I could have lived anywhere.

FRANK
(Laughs)
Your roommate's from Providence?

MARY
No. From here. I met her at Stephens. She'll be right up. I had her up here yesterday listening to you.
(To FRANK)
How does anybody write music? I really want to know. To me that's the gift of gifts.

FRANK
Did anybody ever tell you you say all the right things?

MARY
(Meaning it)
Never. I just always wanted to know.

FRANK
Well uh ... then I'll tell you. See -- notes are just ... symbols. Like writers used words as symbols. But where you deal with thoughts we deal more with emotions, or what things sound like.

MARY
Go on.

FRANK
Go on? Well ... okay. The point is ... h... alright. Everybody has rhythm in their bodies. r heart, your pulse. And we just organize notes the w / you writers organize words. But to rhythms that people should naturally just respond to. And music itself ... well music is just more or less a discipline. A technique.

MARY
You just named the t . But I love music. It's so creative.

It is. And it's wonderful to o somebody about it.

CHARLEY
Someday Frank is going to be a very important composer.

MARY
He is.
(To FRANK)
I think you already are.

(Suddenly EVELYN runs out and even in her old robe, scuffs and hair in pin-curls we can see how darling and terrific she is)

EVEL
Hi, is it --
(Sees them ALL)
Oh, you're with guys.
(Squealing, EVELYN turns and exits fast)

MARY
(Calling)
Evelyn! Evelyn!!

MARY (Continued)
(To FRANK and CHARLEY)
That was Evelyn. I forgot to --

CHARLEY
(Has been looking at watch. Interrupts)
You better look now. It's supposed to be right now.

(THEY look through their binoculars. FRANK and CHARLEY taking turns on theirs)

FRANK
See anything?

CHARLEY
I hope we didn't miss it. Should come [illegible] right over --
(HE looks and spots it)
There! There it is!

MARY
I see it!

FRANK
Where?

MARY
(Giving FRANK her binoculars and pointing them as HE looks them)
There it is! There!

FRANK
(Seeing it. A moment)
It's just phenomenal.

MARY
Phenomenal.

CHARLEY
God, don't you wish it was ours.

MARY
It's everybody

CHARLEY
Do you call it [long 'u'] Sputnick or [short 'u'] Sputnick?

FRANK
You just call it a miracle. God.
(Gives the binoculars back to MARY and SHE and CHARLEY look through them)

FRANK (Continued)
Do you know that after this moment, this moment we three are having together, people are going to be able to do anything? Anything they can dream of. What a time to be alive.

(Lights come up around them, revealing the ENTIRE COMPANY Onstage, dressed in various versions of pajamas, robes, scuffs, slippers, etc., ALL with binoculars)

COMPANY
SOMETHING IS STIRRING,
SHIFTING GROUND ...
IT'S JUST BEGUN.
EDGES ARE BLURRING
ALL AROUND,
AND YESTERDAY IS DONE.

FEEL THE FLOW,
HEAR WHAT'S HAPPENING:
WE'RE WHAT'S HAPPENING.
DON'T YOU KNOW?
WE'RE THE MOVERS AND WE'RE THE SHAPERS.
WE'RE THE NAMERS OF TOMORROW'S SHAPERS.
UP TO US NOW TO SHOW 'EM ...

IT'S OUR TIME, BREATHE IT IN:
WORLDS TO CHANGE AND WORLDS TO
OUR TURN COMING THROUGH,
ME AND YOU, PAL,
ME AND YOU!

FRANK, CHARLEY & MARY
YEARS FROM NOW,
WE'LL REMEMBER AND WE'LL COME BACK,
BUY THE ROOFTOPS AND HANG A PLAQUE:

FRANK
THIS IS WHERE WE BEGAN
BEING WHAT WE CAN.

CHARLEY & MARY
THIS IS WHERE WE BEGAN
DOING WHAT WE CAN.

ALL
IT'S OUR HEADS ON THE BLOCK.
GIVE US ROCK AND START THE CLOCK.
OUR DREAM COMING TRUE,
ME AND YOU, PAL,
ME AND YOU!
ME AND YOU!
ME AND YOU!
ME AND YOU!
ME AND YOU!
ME AND YOU!
ME AND YOU!
ME AND YOU!

(Blackout)

2-5-71 (5/4/81)

ACT II

Scene 5

The bleachers, the set and the GRADUATES are as in 1-1. We are again at the Lake Forest Academy commencement exercises. The GRADUATING CLASS again sits Onstage in the bleachers in their caps and gowns facing the audience. FRANK stands Center Stage, also facing the audience, concluding the Valedictorian address.

The year is 19[illegible] years earlier than the [illegible] scene.

FRANK

... all this and more have I, and this 1955 c[illegible]ting class, learned at Lake Forest Academy. And I hope [illegible] following song my classmate, Charles Kringas, and [illegible] posed for this occasion, that [illegible]

(HE paus[illegible]

My final thought as [illegible]edicto[illegible] a mighty thought. It is the obligation we [illegible]

to grow, to accomplish, to change t[illegible] It is follow the world belief in riches or pre[illegible]e o[illegible] power, but to follow what is in our hearts. A legendary k[illegible] once promised the greatest minds of his kingdom a vast reward if they could but find the one constant in this world. And after years of contemplation they came to him with their conclusion. And that was simply -- 'the only constant is change'. And for us -- now is the beginning of that change.

(FRANK turns, nods his head and the GRADUATING CLASS rises. CHARLEY, in the front, nods and smiles to FRANK. FRANK nods and smiles back. FRANK lifts his arms and le[illegible]s the class in the commencement composition).

THE [illegible]ND